# CITY HILIGHTS

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# MODI...MODI...THRUM KNESSET

- Modi becomes first Indian PM to address the Israeli Paliament 'Knesset'
- India stands with Israel with full conviction, in this moment and beyond: PM Modi
- India-Israel ties written in blood and sacrifice: PM Modi
- India stands out in a rising anti-semitic world: Netanyahu

> The road to peace is not always easy, but India joins you and the world for dialogue, peace and stability.
>
> —Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

> Modi is 'a great friend' of Israel, a great champion of the Israeli-Indian alliance, and a great leader on the world stage.
>
> —Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister

## India stands firmly with Israel: PM Modi

**TEL AVIV**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his address to the Israeli parliament Knesset -- a first by an Indian Prime Minister -- re-affirmed that India stands with Israel in its battle against terror.

In the address - a marquee event of the visit - PM Modi drew a parallel between the Hamas attack of October 2023 in which around 1,200 people were killed and the 26/11 attack in Mumbai, in which around 175 people died.

"We feel your pain. We share your grief. India stands with Israel firmly, with full conviction in this moment and beyond," PM Modi said.

"India's connection to this land (Israel) is also written in blood and sacrifice. During the First World War, more than 4,000 Indian soldiers laid down their lives in this region. The cavalry charge at Haifa in September 1918 remains a significant chapter in military history,' he added.

**Modi scripts history**

Modi on Wednesday made history by becoming the first Indian Prime Minister to address the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset, a rare honour that underscores the political warmth between the two democracies.

Modi said, "The Gaza Peace Initiative, which was endorsed by the UN Security Council, offers a pathway. India has expressed its firm support for the initiative. We believe that it holds the promise of a just and durable peace for all the people of the region, including by addressing the Palestine issue. Let all our efforts be guided by wisdom, courage, and humanity. The road to peace is not always easy, but India joins you and the world for dialogue, peace and stability in this region"

He further said, "Nine years ago, I had the good fortune to be the first Prime Minister of India to visit Israel, and I'm very happy to be here again. I was born on the same day that India formally recognised Israel on September 17, 1950."

With his address, PM Modi enters the august list of the world leaders who addressed Knesset - several US presidents including Donald Trump, late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, and Argentine President Javier Milei.

Modi arrived in Tel Aviv on Wednesday afternoon for a two-day state visit aimed at further strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations. He was received by Israel PM Netanyahu and his wife Sara at the airport. This is PM Modi's second trip to Israel and comes at a moment in the evolving partnership between the two nations.

## Modi great friend of Israel: Netanyahu

**TEL AVIV**

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed PM Modi to the Israeli Parliament, Knesset.

He described Modi as 'a great friend of Israel, a great champion of the Israeli-Indian alliance, and a great leader on the world stage.' "Welcome to Jerusalem, my dear friend, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and your distinguished delegation. Welcome to Jerusalem," he said.

Hailing deep trade and cooperation between Israel and India, Netanyahu described Modi as 'more than a friend, a brother'. He spoke about the common interests that both countries share and thanked Modi for standing by Israel during the October 7 attacks in Israel.

"You stood next to Israel, you stood by Israel, you stood for Israel, you stood for the truth. Thank you, my friend."

## 'Hexagon of Alliance': Pak rattled as India gets seat at Israel's power table

Pak Senate passed a resolution condemning Netanyahu's plan to ally with New Delhi

**ISLAMABAD**

Pakistan is rattled by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's pitch for a "hexagon of alliances" with India, with Islamabad calling it an "anti-Muslim Ummah bloc."

The Pakistani Senate has unanimously passed a resolution condemning Netanyahu's plan to ally with New Delhi and other countries to counter the "radical Shia axis" of Islamic nations.

The resolution was moved by Pakistan Peoples Party lawmaker Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan on behalf of all political parties against Israel's policies and actions. PPP is an integral part of the PM Shehbaz Sharif-led ruling coalition.

It also called Netanyahu's call a "vile proclivity of the leadership of the Israeli occupying power towards diminishing the unity and integrity of the Muslim Ummah on political and ideological grounds." Ummah is an Arabic term meaning "nation" or "community".

**What is Hexagon of Alliances with India as key player?**

The "hexagon" of alliances includes countries like India, Arab nations, African nations, Mediterranean nations (Greece and Cyprus) and other undisclosed nations in Asia. The description broadly matches the vision of IMEC, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, which aims to bolster economic development by fostering connectivity. The alliance aims to create an axis of nations that agrees on the reality, challenges and goals against radical axes, namely the Shia axis and the Sunni axis. The Israeli leader said that the nations included in the alliance share different perceptions and added that the cooperation between them could give great results and ensure their "resilience and future".

## Epstein laid foundation of India-Israel ties post-2014: Cong

**NEW DELHI**

The Congress on Wednesday cited several email exchanges made public under the 'Epstein Files' in the US to allege that the foundation of the India-Israel relationship post-2014 was laid down and shaped by convicted American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Congress' Media and Publicity Department head Pawan Khera said India's foreign policy regarding Israel and Palestine has always been based on the 'two-nation' theory but an "America-Israel lobby" changed the state and direction of the decades-old foreign policy.

"Jeffrey Epstein is a notorious sex offender for the common people, but a hero for the Modi government's foreign policy. Even after death, Epstein lives on in the Modi government's decisions and policies," Khera alleged, with a big movie-like parody poster, 'Jeffrey Ne Bana Di Jodi', behind him.

## Mystery shrouds death of Soren's grandson in Manali

**RANCHI**

Veer Soren, grandson of former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren and son of Babulal Soren, died on Tuesday under mysterious circumstances while vacationing with his friends in Manali.

Veer (19) was studying out of the state and had went on a vacation with his friends on February 22. They were staying at a hotel in Simsa.

On February 23, they visited Solang Valley and Sethan village near Hamta Pass. After returning to the hotel that evening, Veer had reportedly fallen ill. "At around 12:30 pm on Tuesday, after returning from his trip, Veer complained of a severe headache. His friends gave him medicine, after which he went to sleep to rest. Around 2:30 pm, a loud sound was heard in the room. When his friends went to check on him, they found him lying on the bed," sources said.

His health deteriorated at the hotel late at night. When the situation worsened further, his friends immediately rushed him to Civil Hospital, Manali.

"On the way to the hospital, foam was seen discharging from his mouth. At the hospital, doctors performed CPR for a long time, but he could not be revived and was declared dead," said sources close to the Soren family.

Upon receiving information about the incident, Champai Soren left for Delhi from Ranchi. He was accompanied by his three sons: Simal Soren, Babulal Soren, and Bablu Soren.

## Epstein link 'huge mistake': Bill

**NEW YORK**

American tech entrepreneur Bill Gates has apologised to the staff at the Gates Foundation over his ties with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein but maintained that he did "nothing illicit."

The Microsoft co-founder acknowledged in a town hall meeting that his association with Epstein was a "huge mistake" and said it had cast a cloud over the philanthropic organisation's reputation.

"It was a huge mistake to spend time with Epstein. I apologise to other people who are drawn into this because of the mistake that I made," he told employees, taking responsibility for the fallout.

The latest tranche of documents released by the US Department of Justice (DOJ) last week showed a draft email in which Epstein wrote some unverified claims about Gates. In the draft, Epstein alleged that his relationship with Bill Gates included helping him obtain drugs "in order to deal with consequences of sex with Russian girls, to facilitating his illicit trysts with married women."

Gates said photographs showing him standing with women whose faces have been redacted were taken at Epstein's request after meetings. According to him, the women in those images were Epstein's assistants, and they posed for photographs following discussions. "I did nothing illicit. I saw nothing illicit."

"To be clear, I never spent any time with Epstein's victims, the women around him," he clarified. "Every minute I spent with him, I regret, and I apologise," he added.

Gates further said the presence of other well-known and influential individuals at meetings with Epstein made the situation appear more acceptable at the time. "Seeing respected figures interact with Epstein made it feel "normalized," he added.

**Meetings continued after Epstein's conviction**

Gates told staff that he began meeting Epstein in 2011 and was aware of his legal trouble that restricted his travel, but admitted that he did not conduct a thorough background check at the time.

**Admits affairs with Russian women**

He also admitted that he had two affairs with Russian women during his marriage.

## 32 shops gutted in massive fire in B'luru's Chickpet

**BENGALURU**

A massive fire broke out in a hardware warehouse at Kumbarpet in Central engaluru's Chickpet area on Wednesday morning, triggering panic among traders and residents in the busy commercial locality.

The incident occurred under the jurisdiction of the Halasuru Gate Police Station around 6 am. However, no casualties were reported.

As per officials, the blaze erupted in a three-storey building where plastic pipes and other hardware materials were stored. As the complex had several shops and godown storing a large quantity of plastic goods, thick plumes of smoke quickly engulfed the building and spread to the surrounding area, causing alarm in the congested market.

On receiving an alert, four fire tenders rushed to the spot and launched firefighting operations till 1.30 pm. Fire personnel battled the flames for over an hour before bringing the situation under control.

It may be recalled here that five people, including four of a family with two children, were killed in fire in a multi-storied building housing a goods shop and a godown in Nagarthpet, just 400 meters away from Nagarthpet on August 16, 2025. A couple, who lived on the 5th floor of a building, had a miraculous escape after a massive fire broke out at warehouse at Kumbarpet on Novemebr 20, 2023.

**QUICK READ**

### Foreigner tenants: Cops to issue notices to house owners

**BENGALURU:** The city police are set to issue notices to landlords who rent out their properties to foreigners without informing the authorities. This move comes after several cases of foreigners being involved in drug-related activities and other illicit activities were reported in the city. Despite repeated requests from the police, many landlords have been ignoring the rules and renting out their properties to foreigners without verifying their credentials or informing the authorities. The police are now planning to take strict action against those who flout the rules. The notices will inform landlords about the rules and regulations they need to follow.

**'DEFAMING JUDICIARY?'**

## 'Graft in judiciary': NCERT pulls textbook from website

**NEW DELHI**

**'Drafting, approving officials should have exercised caution'**

Government sources said that although NCERT functions as an autonomous body, officials responsible for drafting and approving the chapter should have exercised greater caution. If corruption was to be discussed, it ought to have covered all three organs of the state, the executive, legislature and judiciary, rather than singling out one institution, they added.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has removed a Class 8 social science textbook from its website after the Supreme Court expressed strong displeasure over a chapter referring to judicial corruption, sources said on Wednesday.

According to government sources, the inclusion of the controversial content has not gone down well with the Centre.

The council is also considering deleting the contentious portions from copies of the book that have already been printed. However, several schools in the national capital told PTI that they have not yet received any directive on whether the chapter should be taught.

A three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi took suo motu cognisance of what it termed "objectionable" statements about the judiciary in the NCERT textbook after senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Singhvi mentioned the matter for urgent consideration.

CJI Kant strongly objected to the inclusion of a chapter on judicial corruption in the Class 8 curriculum, observing that nobody on earth would be permitted to defame the judiciary or cast aspersions on its integrity.

The new NCERT social science textbook for Class 8 lists corruption, a massive backlog of cases and a shortage of judges among the key challenges facing the judicial system. It cites data stating that approximately 81,000 cases are pending in the Supreme Court, 62.40 lakh in high courts and 4.70 crore in district and subordinate courts.

The book also refers to internal accountability mechanisms within the judiciary and mentions the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) as a channel for complaints. According to the text, more than 1,600 complaints were received through this mechanism between 2017 and 2021.

It further quotes former Chief Justice of India B R Gavai, who in July 2025 said instances of corruption and misconduct within the judiciary had adversely affected public confidence. "However, the path to rebuilding this trust lies in the swift, decisive and transparent action taken to address and resolve these issues... Transparency and accountability are democratic virtues," he is quoted as saying.

## PMLA crackdown: ED seizes Anil Ambani's 'Abode'

**MUMBAI**

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has slapped a provisional attachment order on Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani's opulent Mumbai residence, 'Abode', valued at a staggering Rs 3,716.83 crore, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Located in the upscale Pali Hill, this 66-meter-high, 17-storey luxury tower now joins a growing list of seized assets in a probe tied to alleged bank fraud at Ambani's group firm, Reliance Communications (RCOM).

Official sources confirmed the move, pushing the total attachments in this case to around Rs 15,700 crore.

## QUICK READ

### Monastic Initiation Ceremony at Vishwakarma Mahasamsthan Math

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The monastic initiation and disciple acceptance ceremony of the successors of the Vishwakarma Mahasamsthan Math at Aremadanahalli will be held on Thursday with religious fervour. Addressing a press conference, P. Sugnanamurthy, chairman of the Vishwakarma Community Development Corporation, said elaborate arrangements have been made for the ceremony. A religious gathering and inauguration programme was held at the Math on February 25. The rituals will be conducted in the divine presence of His Holiness Anantha Sri Vibhushitha Sri Shivasugnana Theerthamahaswamiji and other seers from various Mathas. Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and several political leaders are expected to participate in the ceremony.

### Two Killed as Bullet Bike Crashes into Tree During Triple Ride

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Two youths were killed and another injured after a bullet motorcycle crashed into a tree while they were riding triple near Unnikrishnan Junction in Yelahanka. The deceased have been identified as Kiran (25) and Yashwant (25). Gautam, who was riding pillion at the rear, sustained serious injuries and has been admitted to hospital. According to police, the three were riding without helmets when the rider lost control and the bike rammed into a tree before overturning. Kiran died on the spot, while Yashwant succumbed to injuries on the way to hospital. A case has been registered at Yelahanka Traffic Police Station. The bodies were shifted to Yelahanka Government Hospital for post-mortem.

# BJP, Community Groups Oppose Proposed Honour Killing Bill

Community organisations representing upper castes, including Veerashaiva-Lingayats and Vokkaligas, have expressed reservations about the bill

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Congress government's proposed legislation to curb crimes linked to inter-caste marriages, including honour killings, has sparked sharp opposition from the BJP and several community organisations, who have termed the draft law discriminatory and selective.

The Department of Law and Parliamentary Affairs has prepared the Karnataka Choice in Marriage and Prevention and Prohibition of Crimes in the Name of Honour and Tradition Bill, 2026, in response to rising incidents of caste-based violence. The bill proposes stringent penalties, including life imprisonment and even the death sentence, and is expected to be tabled during the March budget session.

However, critics argue that the proposed law focuses solely on inter-caste marriages and excludes inter-religious marriages, making it biased. Former BJP minister S. Suresh Kumar alleged that the bill targets the Hindu community under the guise of preventing honour killings and said the party would strongly oppose it.

The move follows the shocking killing of 19-year-old Manya Patil in Dharwad in December. Patil, who was six months pregnant, was allegedly murdered by her Lingayat family for marrying a Scheduled Caste youth. Her father and other family members were arrested in connection with the case. The incident intensified demands for stronger legal safeguards to protect couples exercising their constitutional right to choose their partners.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H.K. Patil defended the proposal, stating that it is the government's duty to ensure freedom of choice in marriage and prevent caste-based crimes. He said the bill seeks to address continuing discrimination that manifests in brutal forms of violence against young adults.

Community groups, however, remain wary. H.M. Renuka Prasanna, National Secretary of the Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva-Lingayat Mahasabha, said that while the bill's title draws inspiration from Basavanna's vachanas emphasising inclusivity, its provisions appear exclusive. "We will decide our next step depending on the government's move," he said.

Interestingly, the Mahasabha is headed by Congress minister Eshwar Khandre, who clarified that the bill has not yet reached the Cabinet and assured that it would be examined to ensure no community faces discrimination.

Legal experts have also questioned the necessity of a new law. Supreme Court advocate and constitutional expert K.V. Dhananjay noted that murder is already punishable with life imprisonment or death under existing laws, calling the proposed legislation potentially redundant.

# City's Garbage Trail Leads to ₹3.6 Cr in Fines, 82K Litter Cases

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

If you are still tossing parcel boxes, food wrappers or plastic covers onto city roads, be warned — the cameras are watching. Between August 2025 and January 2026, an intensified anti-litter enforcement drive by Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) has resulted in over 3.6 crore in penalties and more than 82,000 violations booked across the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits.

The crackdown relied on CCTV surveillance, ward marshals and complaints received through the helpline. Officials said cases are mapped zone-wise, and action is initiated based on video evidence and citizen inputs. Each city corporation zone has two sub-divisions, with five surveillance cameras installed in each sub-division to monitor littering hotspots. More cameras are expected to be added to curb recurring black spots.

Kari Gowda, CEO of BSWML, said enforcement has been significantly strengthened to ensure responsible waste disposal. "We launched multiple initiatives to catch litterbugs and book cases based on complaints received through the helpline. Our marshals, along with local staff, were effective in preventing random dumping on the streets," he said.

> The enforcement drive also covered public hygiene violations. Over six months, 308 cases of public urination and 183 cases of spitting were booked, resulting in ₹45,100 in fines.

One of the most striking initiatives was the launch of 'Kasa Suriyuva Habba' (Garbage Dumping Festival) in late 2025. Using CCTV footage, officials traced habitual offenders who dumped waste at night. Instead of just issuing fines, authorities returned the dumped garbage to the violators' homes under supervision. During the pilot phase, 218 households had their waste returned in a single day. "If you throw it on our streets, we will bring it back to your home," a senior official remarked.

Solid waste violations formed the bulk of cases, but plastic ban breaches generated heavier penalties. In January 2026 alone, plastic violations fetched 24.7 lakh in fines. Under revised norms, commercial establishments face fines of up to 50,000 for repeat offences, while households are fined 2,000 for dumping waste — a steep increase from the earlier 500.

# Anti-National Claims Trigger Protest at Azim Premji University

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Tension gripped Azim Premji University (APU) near Sarjapur after activists of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) barged into the campus protesting a proposed discussion on the Kunan Poshpora incident in Kashmir. Police detained around 25 ABVP activists as a preventive measure and deployed two platoons of the State Reserve Police Force to maintain order.

The programme, titled 'Kunan Poshpora — 35 years after the incident occurred in Kashmir', was scheduled for 6 pm and organised by Spark APU, a reading circle affiliated with the All India Students Association (AISA), the student wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation. Posters for the event referenced allegations that 35 women were gang-raped by security forces in Kupwara district's Kunan and Poshpora villages in 1991, stating that no convictions had followed and inviting discussion on "violence by the Indian State in Kashmir."

ABVP leaders alleged that the event aimed to promote anti-national views and portray Indian soldiers as perpetrators. They gathered outside the university gate, shouting slogans, and allegedly smeared black paint on the university's name board before attempting to force their way inside. Police intervened and shifted the activists to Sarjapur police station.

In a statement, APU clarified that it had not granted permission for the event and that no such discussion was held on its premises. "Those who forced their way into our campus were protesting an event that they claimed was going to be held here. Azim Premji University had not authorised any event of such nature. This event, allegedly planned by a small group of students, did not happen at all," the statement read. The university also condemned the damage and unrest caused on campus.

Following the cancellation of the programme, students led by AISA assembled inside the campus to protest ABVP's actions. Aratrika, AISA General Secretary, Bengaluru chapter, described the episode as a clash of ideologies and accused ABVP of attempting to stifle debate in academic spaces.

# HC Quashes Case Against Principal Over Alleged Flag Insult

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

In a significant relief to B.C. Venugopal, Principal of Bagalagunte Government High School in Nagasandra, the High Court of Karnataka has quashed criminal proceedings initiated against him under Section 2 of the Prevention of Insults to National Honours Act, 1971. The case stemmed from a complaint filed in October 2024 by activist B.M. Chikkanna, who alleged that Venugopal had posted a WhatsApp status image during Gandhi Jayanti celebrations showing him standing with slippers on the national flag, thereby insulting it. Challenging the proceedings, Venugopal contended that his mobile phone had been in the possession of his students, who allegedly edited his photograph and superimposed it over an image of the national flag. He maintained that he neither intended to insult the flag nor had knowledge of the altered image being circulated.

# Woman Arrested for Running MDMA Network with Nigerian

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

In a major crackdown on synthetic drug trafficking, the Anti-Narcotics Wing of the Central Crime Branch (CCB) has arrested a 44-year-old woman for allegedly operating an MDMA distribution network in association with a Nigerian national, targeting college students, businessmen and IT-BT professionals in north-east Bengaluru.

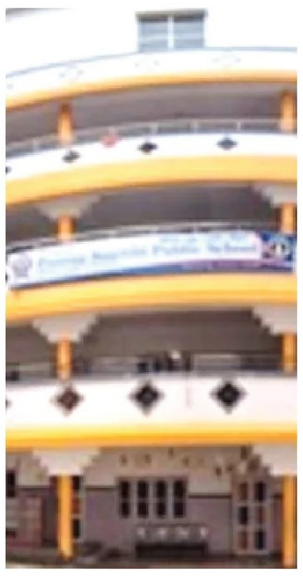
The accused, N.K. Subhashini, a resident of Puttanna Layout near Marasandra on Bagalur Main Road, was arrested following a tip-off received by Sub-Inspector K. Keshavamurthy. Acting on credible information, the police team raided her rented house and seized more than 3,000 ecstasy pills, along with a mobile phone, a portable weighing machine and zip-lock covers used for packaging.

According to police, Subhashini had been in contact for the past four years with a Nigerian national identified as Lutaya Patrick, who is currently absconding. Patrick allegedly sourced the pills either from Nigeria or through other Nigerian nationals residing in Bengaluru. Officials said the duo had built a steady clientele and were selling each pill for 5,000 to 6,000, using the illegal proceeds to fund a lavish lifestyle.

Investigations revealed that whenever Patrick received orders, he would share details and customer locations with Subhashini via WhatsApp. She would pack the pills in zip-lock covers and drop them at designated spots, sharing photographs with visible landmarks and live location details. Customers would collect the contraband without directly meeting either of the accused, maintaining communication solely through WhatsApp to evade detection. Police records indicate that Patrick has been residing in Bengaluru for nearly a decade and was previously arrested by Kothanur police in 2018 in a drug-related case.

# CBSE Directs Karnataka Schools Not to Start Classes 10, 12 Before April 1

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**



The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has instructed its affiliated schools in Karnataka not to commence Classes 10 and 12 before April 1, reiterating that the academic session must strictly run from April 1 to March 31.

In a circular dated February 23, the CBSE's Bengaluru regional office noted that several schools were beginning the new academic session for Classes 10 and 12 immediately after final exams in February, effectively cutting short the summer vacation. The Board warned that compressing coursework into a shorter timeframe could overwhelm students, causing stress, anxiety and burnout. It referred to a 2023 directive emphasizing adherence to the prescribed academic calendar.

It is common practice among some Bengaluru schools to conclude Classes 9 and 11 in February and start board exam classes soon after. However, CBSE has advised principals to ensure that students are not compelled to attend academic sessions during the designated vacation period.

A senior regional officer said the advisory followed complaints from parents that schools were sacrificing holidays to complete portions early. Meanwhile, some school heads expressed practical concerns, stating that beginning the session in April poses challenges due to harsh summer conditions in South India.

The principal of a prominent CBSE school in Bengaluru argued that the April–March calendar is more suitable for North Indian states and suggested flexibility based on regional needs. Last year, nearly 94,000 students registered for Class 10 and about 22,000 for Class 12 board examinations in Karnataka.

# Doctors Warn of Kidney Stones, UTIs as Summer Nears

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

With temperatures steadily rising, city doctors are reporting an early surge in cases of kidney stones and urinary tract infections (UTIs), conditions commonly linked to dehydration, sedentary lifestyles, diabetes and obesity. Hospitals say the seasonal spike, typically seen during peak summer, has begun weeks earlier this year.

Medical experts note that while winter usually records about one kidney stone case per day, the number often doubles during hotter months, pushing monthly cases to 50–60. Dr. Rajeev Bashetty, Consultant Urologist, said low water intake remains one of the leading causes. "Excess consumption of non-vegetarian food, particularly red and organ meat, high-salt junk food, and a sedentary routine also contribute to stone formation," he explained. Urban professionals in Bengaluru, especially tech employees who spend long hours seated with minimal physical activity, are considered high-risk.

Echoing the concern, Dr. Govardhan Reddy, Director of Renal Transplant at Sakra World Hospital, said he is currently seeing one to two kidney stone cases daily. While severe abdominal pain and blood in urine are common symptoms, many stones remain undetected. Increased health check-ups and routine ultrasound scans have led to more asymptomatic cases being identified. Stones lodged within the kidney may not cause discomfort unless they block the ureter, which carries urine to the bladder. "We have seen patients with stones as large as 3–4 cm without symptoms. However, untreated stones can lead to recurrent infections and long-term kidney damage," Dr. Bashetty cautioned.

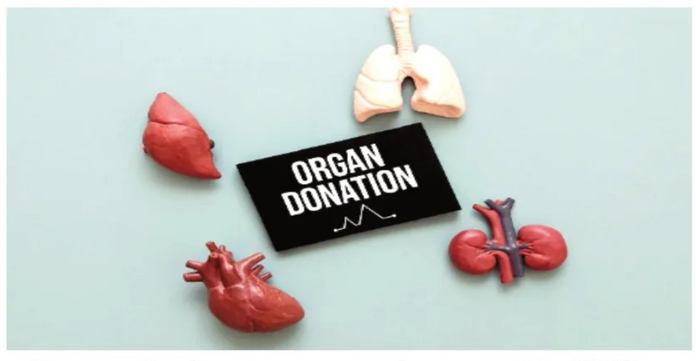
**ENCOURAGING ORGAN DONATION**

# *Organ Retrieval Centre to Ease Donation Process*

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

In a move aimed at making organ donation more compassionate and family-centric, a state-of-the-art non-transplant organ retrieval centre, Jeeva Spandana, will be inaugurated in the coming months at Victoria Hospital.

Unlike conventional systems where brain-dead patients are shifted directly to operating theatres for organ retrieval, the new facility will provide families with a private and peaceful environment to grieve before the procedure begins. Officials say this approach is expected to encourage organ donation by making the emotionally difficult process more sensitive and dignified.




Organ retrieval centres are specialised hospital facilities designed to identify, maintain and retrieve organs from brain-dead donors for transplantation. They focus on supporting donor families and coordinating with transplant centres, often without conducting transplants themselves.

Announced in 2025 at a cost of 1 crore, Jeeva Spandana will include a dedicated four-bed ICU separate from the regular intensive care unit. "Once brain death is declared, we will move the donor and family members to this smaller, more ambient ICU space," said Dr S. Deepak, Medical Superintendent of Victoria Hospital. "Families can spend as much time as they need with their loved one before we proceed with organ retrieval."

The centre will also house an information kiosk and a communication hub. The communication centre will relay real-time updates about retrieved organs to transplant teams in other cities, helping them prepare recipients and coordinate procedures efficiently.

Earlier, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao had announced plans to establish organ retrieval centres in 22 medical college hospitals statewide. However, progress has largely been limited to Bengaluru. Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil said that apart from Victoria Hospital, no additional centres have been set up, citing greater demand in the capital where kidney transplants are conducted at the Institute of Nephro Urology and liver transplants at the Institute of Gastroenterology Sciences and Organ Transplant.

He added that there are currently no immediate plans for more centres, except for the upcoming 1,000-bed charitable multi-organ transplant hospital being developed by the Azim Premji Foundation in collaboration with the state government.

Officials hope Jeeva Spandana will serve as a model for balancing medical efficiency with empathy during some of life's most difficult moments.

QUICK READ

## Kumbabishekam Held at Sri Varasiddi Vinayaka Temple

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Kumbabishekam ceremony was held at the Sri Varasiddi Vinayaka Temple in TG Extension, Hoskote, marking the completion of renovation works at the temple. On the auspicious occasion, priests conducted various homas and religious rituals amid chanting of Vedic hymns. The sacred ceremony drew the participation of a large number of devotees from the locality. Former Municipal Council President C. Rudraradhya, former Councillor B. Basavaraj, and Temple Management Committee members Ravi, M.K. Narasimhaiah and Umesh were present during the event. Hundreds of devotees gathered to witness the rituals and seek blessings at the renovated temple premises.

## Girish Chodankar Visits Suraj Hegde at Ramaiah Hospital

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Girish Chodankar, AICC General Secretary and Tamil Nadu Congress incharge, visited Ramaiah Memorial Hospital to meet Suraj Hegde, AICC General Secretary and Vice Chairman of State Guarantees, who is undergoing treatment in the ICU. Rahul Gandhi enquired about Hegde's health through a video conference and spoke to his wife and son, Samruddhi Heggade, wishing him a speedy recovery. Chodankar discussed Hegde's condition with the attending doctors and urged them to provide the best possible treatment. He conveyed that the entire Congress party stands in solidarity with Hegde and expressed confidence that with prayers and proper care, he would recover soon.

# Leadership Change Buzz Likely to Intensify

### It is clear that a leadership change is in doubt at the moment, just as CM begins preliminary meetings for the state budget

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The power struggle within the ruling party appears far from over, with renewed murmurs of leadership change expected to intensify after the budget session. While Chief Minister Siddaramaiah focuses on presenting the 2026–27 budget, sections within the party continue to fuel speculation about a possible change at the top.

For months, calls for a change in the Chief Minister have surfaced intermittently. A faction of MLAs reportedly close to Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar has openly discussed leadership transition. Adding a new dimension to the debate, some voices have now raised the demand for a Dalit Chief Minister, further widening the contours of the internal power contest.

Despite the growing chatter, indications from the party high command have not supported any immediate change. As Siddaramaiah began holding pre-budget consultations and fine-tuning allocations, it became evident that a leadership shift is unlikely in the immediate term. The budget presentation temporarily pushed the power tussle into the background.

However, political signals suggest the issue is far from settled. Shivakumar's recent visit to Delhi to meet party leaders, reportedly skipping certain pre-budget meetings, reignited speculation. Statements from his supporters once again brought the leadership debate into sharp focus.

The so-called "November revolution" discussions last year and the renewed clamour in December had already heightened tensions. Although the absence of a clear directive from the high command cooled tempers briefly, the underlying rivalry persists.

With the budget session nearing completion, observers believe the leadership debate may gather momentum once again. Political developments after the session are expected to determine whether the power struggle escalates or settles, but for now, the question of change continues to cast a shadow over the state's political landscape.

# BMTC Plans High-Street Makeover for TTMC Rooftops

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

In a significant push to transform bus stations into bustling public destinations, the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has floated tenders to lease rooftop spaces at two of its busiest transit hubs — Shanthinagar Traffic and Transit Management Centre (TTMC) and Vijayanagar TTMC. The move is aimed at generating substantial non-fare revenue while enhancing commuter amenities.

Shanthinagar TTMC (operational since 2010) and Vijayanagar TTMC (inaugurated in 2011) were developed under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) scheme, with a combined investment exceeding Rs 160 crore. Both complexes currently house government offices, commercial establishments, parking facilities and key transport services.

Under the proposal, terrace areas will be converted into commercial and public-use spaces, accommodating restaurants, cafés, bakeries, supermarkets, gyms, clinics, coaching centres, pharmacies, showrooms, multiplexes, game zones, dormitories and sports facilities. Liquor services, however, are not permitted. In all, more than 15 categories of activities have been approved.

At Shanthinagar TTMC, 20,097 sq ft of rooftop space has been earmarked for development, while Vijayanagar TTMC offers 20,976 sq ft. The monthly licence fee has been fixed at Rs 6.8 lakh (including GST) for Shanthinagar and Rs 7.5 lakh (including GST) for Vijayanagar. The initial lease term is three years, extendable by another three years through mutual agreement. Successful bidders must deposit 11 months' licence fee as a security deposit.

To ease project rollout, BMTC has provided a three-month rent-free gestation period. The terraces will be handed over on an 'as-is-where-is' basis, and operators must secure all statutory approvals — including building plan sanctions, fire safety clearances and occupancy certificates — before commencing operations. Any structural modifications will require prior approval and must strictly adhere to municipal bylaws and safety standards.

Certain activities have been explicitly barred, including hazardous industries, liquor outlets, slaughterhouses, automobile workshops, heavy storage units, polluting or noisy industries, and data centres with high cooling requirements.

## 2 Housekeeping Staff Held for Impersonating GST Officials, Extorting Trader

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

The Banashankari police have arrested two housekeeping staff for allegedly posing as Goods and Services Tax (GST) officials and extorting 5 lakh from a trader.

The accused, Nagaraj and Dadapeer, were working on an outsourced basis as housekeepers at the office of the Principal Commissioner of the GST Department in Banashankari. According to police, the duo used fake identity cards claiming to be CLTS and intelligence officers to threaten a gutka trader in Peenya on January 10 and extort money.

The fraud came to light after GST department officials grew suspicious of their activities. On February 17, a search of the room where the accused were staying led to the recovery of fake ID cards and forged search warrant documents. Following this, officials lodged a complaint at the Banashankari police station.

Based on the complaint, police arrested both the accused. They have been remanded to judicial custody.

## 'Give Ministerial Berths to 5 First-Time MLAs'

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Congress MLA Pradeep Ishwar has urged the party high command to allot ministerial positions to at least five of the 31 first-time MLAs, stating that fresh faces deserve representation in the Cabinet. Responding to questions at Vidhana Soudha regarding a signature campaign by Congress legislators seeking Cabinet berths, Ishwar confirmed that he had signed the letter. He said the signatures were collected during the Belagavi session and reflected a collective demand rather than personal ambition.

## Rowdy Gang Brutally Assaults Two Youths on City Outskirts

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Two youths were brutally assaulted by a gang of rowdy sheeters in a shocking incident reported from the outskirts of the city. The attack, which occurred on the banks of Balekere in Narigudde under the jurisdiction of Kaggalipura Police Station, has sparked outrage after a video of the incident went viral on social media.

According to police, the victims, identified as Puneeth and Raphael Anthony, were attacked allegedly over past enmity. The accused, said to be rowdy sheeters including Koli Farm Gaja, Anthony Simon and others, were reportedly consuming alcohol near a pond when the assault took place.

Police sources said Puneeth had earlier used pepper spray against Anthony Simon during a previous altercation. Nursing a grudge, the gang allegedly dragged Puneeth to the pond area and assaulted him with sticks and knives despite his pleas to be spared.

Raphael Anthony, a resident of Tataguppe village, intervened and questioned the attackers. Enraged, the gang allegedly turned on him, beating him with sticks and trampling him before pushing him into a ditch nearly 10 feet deep. He sustained multiple fractures to his arms and legs and was later rescued by villagers and shifted to a hospital.

Following the incident, Kaggalipura Inspector Nanjegowda and his team registered a case of attempt to murder and arrested two of the accused. Efforts are underway to trace and apprehend the remaining members of the gang involved in the assault.

## Govt Ready to Fill Vacancies, Age Limit Raised: Priyank Kharge

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Minister Priyank Kharge has said the state government is committed to filling vacant posts across departments and has already taken steps to increase the upper age limit for recruitment.

Responding to the massive protest by job aspirants in Dharwad, Kharge stated that the government understands the concerns of youth and has acted consistently, both in opposition and in power. "We have already filled 35,000 to 40,000 posts.

There are some issues related to internal reservation, but they will be resolved. The matter will be discussed in the Cabinet on Thursday," he said.

The minister assured that appointments which can be processed immediately will be taken up without delay.

He emphasised that recruitment must follow constitutional provisions ensuring reservation and social justice. "If matters are challenged in the High Court or the Supreme Court, there may be delays, but we will abide by judicial decisions," he added.

Kharge also criticised the previous BJP government, alleging irregularities in recruitment.

According to official data, as many as 2,84,881 posts remain vacant across 43 state government departments. More than 5,000 job aspirants recently staged a large-scale protest in Dharwad demanding immediate recruitment to fill these vacancies.

## Youth Urged to Donate Blood

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

**Dr. Krishna expressed concern over the lower participation of female donors, attributing it to low haemoglobin levels. Chief Orthopedic Specialist Dr. Kiran Chowka from Manipal Hospitals highlighted the ill effects of excessive mobile phone usage, including sleep deprivation and fainting spells.**

Youth and college students must come forward with a spirit of service to donate blood and help save precious lives, said Dr. Woday P. Krishna, General Secretary of Seshadripuram Education Foundation.

He was speaking after inaugurating the K.M. Nanjappa Memorial Mega Blood Donation Camp organised by the Indian Red Cross Society Blood Bank, Karnataka Voluntary Blood Donors Association and ESS AAR Foundation at Seshadripuram Academy of Business Studies College in Kengeri Suburban.

Dr. Krishna said the camp has been conducted annually for nearly 18 years in memory of Shri Nanjappa, with around 2,500 units of blood donated to the Red Cross so far. He emphasised that blood donation transcends caste and religion and contributes to both saving lives and improving health. He also expressed concern over the lower participation of female donors, attributing it to low haemoglobin levels.

Chief Orthopedic Specialist Dr. Kiran Chowka from Manipal Hospitals highlighted the ill effects of excessive mobile phone usage, including sleep deprivation and fainting spells. He encouraged students to focus on sports and physical activity and to donate blood in emergencies.

Principal Dr. Jayaram noted that 151 students from the college donated blood at the camp. Several dignitaries, including police and health officials, were present at the event.

## H.M. Ramesh Gowda Appointed JDS Greater B'luru President

**BENGALURU**

Former MLA H.M. Ramesh Gowda has been appointed as the Greater Bengaluru President of the Janata Dal (Secular) (JDS). The appointment order was issued by former Prime Minister and party National President H. D. Deve Gowda.

Ramesh Gowda received the official appointment letter on Wednesday from the National President and the State President. The party stated that the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has been divided into five zones—Central, North, South, West, and East—and Ramesh Gowda's appointment takes immediate effect.

The National President emphasized that Gowda will be responsible for overseeing party organization across all five zones and addressing any issues that may harm the party. He has been authorized to appoint office-bearers for various Greater Bengaluru units, subject to informing the national and state leadership.

With upcoming Greater Bengaluru Authority elections, he has been directed to hold review meetings at least once every ten days to strengthen party activities and preparedness.

## Guarantees a Financial Burden: DCM Shivakumar

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar has acknowledged that the state government's guarantee schemes are placing a financial burden on the exchequer, but said they were introduced to provide citizens with mental and financial security.

He was speaking at the inauguration of a free ambulance service for hemophilia patients organised by the Health Department.

Referring to major schemes such as 200 units of free electricity, Grihalakshmi, free bus travel, Annabhagya and Shakti Yojana, Shivakumar said that while these initiatives involve substantial expenditure, they were implemented with the intention of supporting the poor and strengthening households. "If I have 10 in my pocket, I will come forward to give 100," he remarked, underlining the government's commitment to welfare measures despite fiscal challenges.

SHOCKING NEGLIGENCE

## *6 Month-Old Infant's Finger Partially Severed at Hospital*

**CH NEWS, BENGALURU**

In a disturbing case of alleged medical negligence, a six-month-old infant suffered partial amputation of a finger while undergoing treatment at Chinmaya Mission Hospital. The incident reportedly occurred during the removal of a medical dressing, triggering outrage among family members and prompting police action.

According to the First Information Report (FIR) registered at the Indiranagar Police Station, the infant was admitted on February 19, 2026, after developing fever and cough. The baby remained under treatment until February 24, during which intravenous fluids were administered.

On the day of discharge, while the parents were at the billing counter completing formalities, a nurse identified as Anita allegedly attempted to remove the dressing and IV line from the baby's left hand. During the procedure, she is said to have used a sharp instrument carelessly, resulting in nearly half of the infant's little finger being cut.

The child reportedly cried in intense pain and was immediately rushed to the hospital's emergency unit for urgent care. Doctors later confirmed that a significant portion of the finger had been severed, raising serious concerns about medical safety and supervision.

Following the incident, the parents lodged a formal complaint accusing the nurse and hospital management of gross negligence. Based on the complaint, police registered an FIR against the nurse and the hospital administration.

Family members staged protests outside the hospital, demanding strict legal action and accountability. Police officials said they are examining medical records, hospital protocols, staff conduct and available CCTV footage as part of the ongoing investigation.

QUICK READ

## Temporary diversion ordered on Gadag-Honnali highway

**HAVERI**

The District Magistrate, Dr. Vijaya Mahantesh Danamma, has ordered a temporary diversion of the Gadag-Honnali State Highway due to ongoing Kship 3 road work. The diversion affects the road connecting Devaragudda village in Ranebennur taluk and will remain in effect from February 24 to March 31. Key sections, including YT Honnatti Cross to Devaragudda, Channapur Cross to Devaragudda, and the road near the petrol pump to Devaragudda, will use the newly constructed temporary route. The move aims to ensure smooth movement of public vehicles during the highway construction period, officials said.

## Extra buses arranged for Adichunchanagiri Jatra

**MANDYA**

The Sri Adichunchanagiri Jatra Mahotsava Rathotsava will be held on March 3. To help devotees attending the festival, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation has arranged 140 extra buses. These buses will operate from Nagamangala, K.R. Pet, Srirangapatna, and Padavapura bus stations, as well as from Mysore, Hassan, Tumkur, and Bangalore bus stations. The divisional control officers of KSRTC said this move aims to ensure smooth travel for the devotees and reduce overcrowding during the festival. People are advised to plan their travel accordingly and use the additional bus services for convenience.

## Sri Yoginareyana Yathindra Jayanti on Mar 3

**KARWAR**

Sri Yoginareyana Yathindra Jayanti program will be held on March 3 at 9 am at the Karnataka State Government Employees' Hall, M.G. Road, Karwar. The event is jointly organized by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and Kannada and Culture Department. Fisheries, Ports, and Inland Waterways Minister Mankala Vaidya will inaugurate, while MLA and KS Marketing Communication Chairman Satish K. Sail will preside. The program will see participation from Legislative Council Speaker Basavaraj Horatti, MP Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri, several MLAs and Council members. Karwar Government Women's College Assistant Professor Hemalatha K. will deliver a special lecture during the celebration.

# Family donates organs, saves 6 lives

### Darshan from Chikka Mandya had an accident on February 22, his condition worsened later, and was moved to Victoria Hospital for brain treatment

**MANDYA**

In a touching act of courage, the family of a brain-dead youth from Chikka Mandya village in Mandya district donated his organs, bringing hope to six patients waiting for life-saving transplants. Doctors called it one of the noblest decisions made in deep sorrow.

The transplant was carried out at the Trauma and Emergency Care Centre of Victoria Hospital. The procedure was performed by the team of Bengaluru Medical College and Research Institute at an affordable cost. Medical Superintendent Dr. Deepak and Special Officer Dr. Asima Banu appreciated the family's strength during their painful time.

Darshan, a young man from Chikka Mandya, fell from his bike on February 22. At first, the injury seemed minor and he returned home. Later, his condition worsened and he was rushed to hospital. Doctors found severe internal brain bleeding and shifted him to Victoria Hospital for advanced treatment.

Despite continuous care and several tests, he showed no improvement. After two days, a senior medical board declared him brain dead. Counselors from the Jeevasaarthakate organ donation team spoke to the family and explained how his organs could save others.

The grieving family agreed to donate his liver, kidneys, heart valves and other organs. These were transplanted into needy patients, giving them a fresh chance at life.

Hospital officials praised the family's selfless act, saying their decision turned tragedy into hope and will inspire many others to consider organ donation in the future.

## ISRO Chairperson to attend Shivamogga Science Day

**SHIVAMOGGA**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairperson V. Narayanan will visit Shivamogga on February 28 to participate in the National Science Day celebrations. The event, organized by the Sri Aurobindo Foundation for Education, will be held at Kuvempu Rangamandira at 4 p.m.During the programme, Mr. Narayanan will make a presentation and interact with students from engineering colleges, Kuvempu University's postgraduate centre, and PUC students. The event will also feature the release of the Kannada translation of the biography of former ISRO scientist and Padma Bhushan awardee B.N. Suresh, titled Onto Rocket Ship, translated by Turuvanooru Manjunath. The author Sunil Suresh, Kuvempu University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Sharath Ananthamurthy, and writer Dr. H.S. Nagabhushan will participate in the programme. Foundation office-bearers, including secretary B.L. Neelakanta Murthy, Dean H.N.S. Rao, and principal Shrikant M. Hegde, were present at a press conference announcing the event.

## Strict steps for fair residential entrance exams

**HAVERI**

Additional District Magistrate Dr. Nagaraj A. has directed officials to conduct the residential school entrance exams in a systematic and transparent manner on March 1. The exams, organised by the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Association, will be held at 39 centres across the district.

Chairing a preparatory meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office, he said the district has maintained a clean record in previous exams and must continue the same standard.

He instructed officers, invigilators and supervisors to follow all guidelines carefully and work in coordination.

A total of 11,908 students have registered for the exam, which will be held from 11 am to 1 pm. Twelve teams, each with three members, have been formed to collect question paper bundles under police security. After the exam, answer scripts must be submitted safely to the district treasury.

He stressed that exam rooms must be clean and dust-free, with proper light, air, drinking water and toilet facilities. Only 24 students will be seated in each room. All staff, including D-group employees, must carry identity cards and report by 9 am.

Use of mobile phones, Bluetooth devices, smart watches and other electronic gadgets is strictly banned. A 200-metre area around centres has been declared a prohibited zone, and nearby Xerox and cyber cafes will remain closed.

Police security and health staff will be deployed at every centre to ensure smooth conduct of the examination.

# Mandya steps up fight against child marriage

**MANDYA**

**Dr. Kumar urged weekly review of Sakhi Centre cases, installation of biometric systems, and prompt provision of shelter, medical, legal aid, and counselling for women facing domestic violence.**

District Collector Dr. Kumar has directed officials to conduct strong awareness campaigns in rural areas against child marriage and dowry. Speaking at a district-level review meeting organised by the Women and Child Development Department at the Collector's office, he said street plays and village programmes must be used to educate people about the Child Marriage and Dowry Prohibition Acts.

He asked teachers to closely monitor attendance of girl students and report unusual absences to prevent early marriages. He also instructed officials to ensure nutritious food is properly supplied in all Anganwadi centres and to personally inspect food quality and basic facilities.

Dr. Kumar said reports of cases registered at the Sakhi One Stop Centre must be reviewed within a week and biometric systems should be installed there. Temporary shelter, medical help, legal aid and counselling must be provided to women facing domestic violence. Out of 565 cases registered this year, 537 have been resolved, and the remaining cases should be settled quickly.

He stressed training for Kavalu Samiti members and awareness among Anganwadi workers to prevent immoral trafficking of women and children. Under Mission Shakti and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao schemes, officials were asked to promote girls' education and improve the declining sex ratio.

District Legal Services Authority Member Secretary Anand A.A. urged officials to counsel victims with care and strengthen village-level awareness efforts.

*Health officials advised sleeping on raised cots, using mosquito nets, carrying torches, wearing boots, and checking firewood to prevent bites*

# AWARENESS KEY TO PREVENT SNAKEBITE DEATHS

**KOPPAL**

District Collector Dr. Suresh B. Itnal has called for strong public awareness to prevent deaths caused by snake bites in Koppal district.

He spoke during a meeting held at the District Collector's Office to review the snake bite prevention and control programme.

He said that India is largely rural, and more than 70 percent of people depend on agriculture. Farmers and those involved in sheep rearing, poultry, and dairy farming often work in fields where snakes move freely. Because of this, people in villages must be educated about simple safety steps that can save lives. The Collector explained that garbage piles and thick bushes around houses attract snakes. Keeping surroundings clean can greatly reduce the risk. He also assured that free treatment for snake bites is available in government hospitals. All hospitals in the district have been instructed to provide treatment round the clock. He advised victims to reach the nearest government hospital within 40 minutes of a bite for better chances of recovery.

Health officials shared practical tips during the meeting. People should avoid sleeping on the ground outside at night and instead sleep on cots or raised platforms. Using mosquito nets and carrying a torch while walking in the dark can help prevent accidental bites.

Farmers were advised to wear rubber boots while working and to check firewood or bundles before lifting them.

Officials from the Health Department and District Legal Services Authority attended the meeting and promised support to spread awareness across villages.

# MP Raghavendra slams government over murder

**SHIVAMOGGA**

**MP SLAMS GOVT OVER MURDER**

Shivamogga MP B.Y. Raghavendra criticized the state government after the brutal murder of SSLC student Sanket in Sulebai. He met the grieving family, demanded swift arrests and strict punishment, and urged higher compensation. He said the incident reflects a serious breakdown of law and order.

Member of Parliament B.Y. Raghavendra strongly criticized the state government over the brutal murder of SSLC student Sanket in Sulebai on the outskirts of the city, calling it a serious failure of law and order.

Raghavendra visited the grieving family at their residence in Sulebai and offered his condolences.

The young student was allegedly attacked by a group of miscreants said to be under the influence of ganja.

The MP expressed deep sorrow after meeting the boy's parents and said their pain was heartbreaking. "A son who should have supported his family has been taken away in a tragic manner," he said.

He demanded strict and immediate action against those responsible. "The accused must be arrested quickly and punished as per law. Justice should not be delayed," he stated. He also urged the government to provide higher compensation and necessary support to the bereaved family.

Raghavendra emphasized that ensuring public safety must be the government's top priority.

He called upon the state authorities to strengthen law enforcement and prevent such incidents from recurring.

BJP city president Mohan Reddy and other party leaders accompanied the MP during the visit.

# Drugs give pleasure, destroy future: Officer

**MANGALURU**

Drugs may give temporary pleasure, but they slowly destroy a person's future, warned Murugendra Shirolkar. He was speaking at a Drug-Free India awareness programme organized by the Transport Department and Police Department at KPT College in Mangaluru on Wednesday. Shirolkar said students are often the main targets of drug peddlers. He cautioned young people to stay alert and not fall into the trap of addiction. Once a person gets used to drugs, it becomes very difficult to come out of it, he explained. What begins as curiosity or fun can soon turn into a serious problem that affects studies, career, and family life. Kavoor Police Sub-Inspector Pratibha also addressed the students. She said drug addiction harms both physical and mental health. It not only affects the person consuming drugs but also disturbs the peace of the entire family. She added that girls must be especially careful, as drug abuse can lead to exploitation and criminal activities. She urged students to report any drug-related activities on campus or nearby areas to the college's anti-drug committee, principal, or the police. The identity of informers will be kept confidential, she assured.

Officials appealed to students to take responsibility and work together to make campuses drug-free.

## DC urges responsible conduct of census work

**KARWAR**

Deputy Commissioner K. Lakshipriya has directed officers and staff to carry out census duties with full responsibility, calling it one of the country's most important national exercises. She spoke at a training workshop for district-level charge officers held at the District Collectorate Hall on Wednesday.

She said census data plays a key role in planning from village level to the national level. Governments depend on these figures to prepare budgets and introduce welfare schemes, including housing and infrastructure projects. Therefore, officers must record clear and accurate information to avoid future confusion.

This will be the eighth census after Independence and the first to be conducted fully in digital mode. A special mobile app has been developed for the process. Enumerators will collect answers to around 30 questions from each household using smartphones. The census will be held in two phases. Self-enumeration will be allowed from April 1 to 15. House listing fieldwork will take place from April 16 to May 16.

DODDUR HEALTH BOOST

# *Free health camp benefits Doddur villagers*

**LAKSHMESHWAR**

Hundreds of villagers benefited from a free health camp organized in the Doddur Gram Panchayat limits of Lakshmeshwar taluk. The camp was conducted jointly by District Hospital Gadag, Smile Foundation Gadag, Ambika Blood Bank Gadag and Doddur Gram Panchayat.

Specialist doctors examined villagers and offered free consultation and guidance. Dr. Venkatesh Rathod, gynecologist Dr. Sunita, cardiologist and diabetes specialist Dr. Sunil Habiba, and Dr. Ravi Kadgavi took part in the camp. They provided detailed advice on children's health, women's health, heart problems and diabetes. Many villagers used the opportunity to get their blood pressure and sugar levels checked.

Panchayat Development Officer Riyaz Khatib said that good health is important for everyone. He noted that in today's busy life, many people suffer from stress, which leads to blood pressure and diabetes. He urged villagers to lead a stress-free and balanced life.

Former Gram Panchayat members Krishna Lamani, Nanappa Lamani, Shankranna Lamani, Ningappa Bankapoor, Fakiragoudra and Bharamagoudra were present at the event. Panchayat Secretary Ramaiah Guravina coordinated the programme smoothly. Village elders and many residents also attended and supported the initiative.

Villagers expressed happiness over the camp and said such free medical services are very helpful in rural areas where access to specialist doctors is limited. The Gram Panchayat thanked all doctors and organizations for conducting the camp and serving the community.

QUICK READ

## Special TB check-up camp held in Chitradurga

**CHITRADURGA**

A special differential health check-up and awareness program for tuberculosis patients was conducted at Nehru Nagar Primary Health Center. Medical Officer Dr. Syed Bilal examined patients and advised them not to discontinue treatment midway. He explained the importance of following drug stages like IP and CP carefully. TB Unit Supervisor STLS Nagaraj and Health Visiting Officer Santosh stressed the need for nutritious food and timely intake of medicines for faster recovery. Health Inspectors, lab technicians, nursing staff, and pharmacy officials also attended. The camp aimed to improve awareness and ensure complete treatment adherence among tuberculosis patients.

## Taluk-level rural sports festival in Manchanabale

**MANCHANABALE**

A rural sports festival will be held on March 1, 2026, at 10:30 am at the BGS School premises in Manchanabale village. Organized by Women's Empowerment, Sanjeevini Gram Panchayat Union (R), BGS High School, and Samyukta Ashraya, the event will feature competitions such as three-legged race, bomb-in-whistle, and sack race for men, and bucket ball, lemon-in-spoon, and musical chairs for women. Certificates and prizes will be awarded to winners. Interested participants are encouraged to join. For more information, contact Manchanabale Srinivas, International Sportsperson, at 9740615534.

## Ornamental plants to be sold at flower exhibition

**CHITRADURGA**

An open auction of ornamental plants displayed in pots at the city's flower exhibition will be held on March 1. The exhibition is organized at the District Horticulture Department premises. The ornamental plants available for sale have a lifespan of about three months. Interested buyers can participate in the auction to purchase the plants. For details on the auction rules and regulations, the Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture can be contacted during office hours. The event provides an opportunity for gardening enthusiasts to acquire decorative plants and support local horticultural initiatives.

# Historic title deeds distribution program announced in campaign

The district administration digitized 1.9 crore revenue pages, plans online access, verifies illegal land cases, and honors 30 diligent staff members

**CHIKKABALLAPURA**

Under the Revenue Village Special Campaign, Chikkaballapura district administration will distribute ownership documents to 2,036 beneficiaries from undocumented settlements on February 27, said Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu. The program will be held on a large platform near Chokkahalli on the city outskirts, with over 51,000 beneficiaries expected to receive benefits in the coming days.

Speaking at the District Collector's office, he explained that the campaign identifies residents of undocumented public housing and ensures they receive official title deeds, e-Pauthi account documents, application documents, and pension order letters under the Social Security Scheme. He credited the support of ministers, MPs, MLAs, and local representatives for the program's success.

The district administration has digitized 1.9 crore pages of revenue records and is working to make all documents available online. Cases of illegal land allocation will also be verified, and ownership confirmed. Thirty staff members who visited every house and delivered documents efficiently will be felicitated for their efforts.

Beneficiaries expressed gratitude for the transparent and people-friendly approach. Manjunath from Manchanabale said families who lived without documents for decades now have legal ownership. Narasimhappa of Adavigollavarahalli praised the free and corruption-free process, while S.M. Munivenkatappa thanked officials for pension sanction letters.

Venkataramaiah of Tippenahalli and Narayanaswamy of Muddenahalli appreciated receiving title deeds and updated land records, making loans and government services easier to access.

Additional District Collector Dr. N. Bhaskar, Tahsildar Rashmi, Gagan Sindhu, and District Information Officer M. Junjanna attended the event.

The program reflects a historic step toward secure housing and efficient governance for citizens of Chikkaballapura district.

# Workshop Empowers Students for Business Startups

**Venkatakrishna informed students about MSME financial support, while K. Shivalingaiah explained the RAMP incubation program and government schemes to foster entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.**

**CHIKKABALLAPUR**

A one-day awareness workshop was held for final-year graduate students in Chikkaballapur to encourage entrepreneurship under the RAMP scheme, organized by the Karnataka Government Industries and Commerce Department, District Industrial Centre, and Government First Grade College. The event took place at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Auditorium on Wednesday.

Prof. R. Vasundhara, Principal of the college, inaugurated the workshop and urged students to explore financial, technical, and mentoring support available under various incubation programs. She highlighted opportunities for students to connect with experts, officials, and entrepreneurs to turn innovative ideas into successful startups.

Venkatakrishna, Manager of the Lead Bank, informed students about financial assistance for MSME entrepreneurs and encouraged them to make use of these resources to create employment opportunities. Joint Director of the District Industries Center K. Shivalingaiah explained that the incubation program under the RAMP scheme provides a platform for creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship for final-year students. He detailed various government schemes for setting up businesses and motivated students to utilize these facilities effectively. The workshop also focused on providing guidance about incubation facilities, networking opportunities, and strategies to develop practical business skills. Participants included Deputy Director (Grakai) of the District Industrial Center Timukunda, Political Science Department Coordinator Dr. Venkatesh, IIQAC Convener Dr. P. Sunitha, librarian Dr. Ningaiah Patil, and subject expert Sharath Babu.

Students appreciated the workshop, stating that it gave them clarity on government support, financial schemes, and practical steps needed to launch startups. Officials emphasized that such programs can inspire youth to become successful entrepreneurs and contribute to local employment and economic growth.

*Officials warned rising youth tobacco use causes serious health issues, educating the public and shopkeepers during raids*

# Tobacco raid in Holalkere, 23 cases filed

**CHITRADURGA**

A district-level tobacco inspection team carried out a raid on shops selling tobacco products in the urban areas of Holalkere taluk. The action was taken under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 (COTPA-2003). A total of 23 cases were registered and fines were collected from violators.

The drive was conducted as part of the National Tobacco Control Programme. It was carried out under the guidance of District Health Officer Dr. G.P. Renuprasad and District Tobacco Control Officer Dr. Rekha. The District Tobacco Control Cell, along with officials from the Health Department and the Municipality, inspected several shops in the town.

Officials said that tobacco addiction among youth is increasing at an alarming rate. They warned that tobacco use is leading to serious health problems and early deaths in society.

During the raid, shopkeepers and members of the public were informed about the harmful effects of smoking and chewing tobacco. They were also advised not to smoke in public places.

Authorities instructed shop owners to display mandatory boards under Sections 4, 6A, and 6B of the Act. Twenty cases were registered under Section 4, and a fine of Rs. 2,075 was imposed. Three cases were registered under Section 6A, and Rs. 275 was collected as fine.

District Advisor B.M. Prabhudeva, social worker K.M. Thippeswamy, Senior Health Inspector M.K. Ranganath, and Municipality Senior Health Inspector T. Kalpana were present during the inspection drive. Officials said such raids will continue to protect public health.

## K.Krishnamurthy appointed Magadi block Cong President

**MAGADI**

Poojaripalya K. Krishnamurthy has been appointed as the new Magadi Block Congress President by Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) President D.K. Shivakumar. The decision, effective immediately, covers the Magadi Block Congress under the Magadi Assembly constituency of Bangalore South District.

The appointment aims to strengthen the party organization at the grassroots level. Krishnamurthy, who is closely associated with local MLA H.C. Balakrishna, requested the position to help boost party activities. Following the MLA's recommendation, KPCC President Shivakumar approved the order.

Krishnamurthy expressed gratitude to D.K. Shivakumar, D.K. Suresh, and MLA H.C. Balakrishna for their trust. He assured that his priority will be organizing the party efficiently, uniting workers, and supporting local leadership to implement government schemes effectively.

KPCC President Shivakumar wished Krishnamurthy success in his new role, while MLA H.C. Balakrishna personally congratulated him. Party officials emphasized that the new president must work under the guidance of the District Congress Committee and focus on strengthening the party's presence and coordination within the block.

Krishnamurthy's appointment is seen as a strategic move to consolidate party organization in Magadi, mobilize local leaders, and enhance engagement with the community.

# K'taka Pushes Modern Agri-Tech Adoption During UK Visit: N. Cheluvarayaswamy

**NEWCASTLE, (UK)**

N. Cheluvarayaswamy visited Newcastle University under a knowledge exchange program, where he addressed the Vice-Chancellor, scientists, and researchers, highlighting Karnataka's agricultural strengths and future vision.

He noted that Karnataka has a geographical area of 19.1 million hectares, of which 12.4 million hectares is cultivable, spread across 10 agro-climatic zones. About 35% of the agricultural land (3.6 million hectares) is irrigated. Major crops include paddy, sugarcane, cotton, jowar, ragi, and horticultural produce such as grapes, pomegranate, coconut, coffee, and spices like pepper.

The state produces 15–16 million tonnes of food grains annually. Agriculture and allied sectors contribute 15–20% to the Gross Domestic Product and provide employment to 55% of the population. Bengaluru's startup ecosystem further strengthens agriculture-based innovations, while Karnataka leads in exports of millets, fruits, vegetables, coffee, and silk.

To develop rain-fed areas, 7.5 million hectares have been covered under watershed programs, with plans to add 5.1 million hectares. Karnataka has been recognized as a "Light House Partner" by the Government of India for World Bank-assisted projects such as Sujala-III and REWARD. Land Resource Inventory data covers 2.5 million hectares, benefiting 1.6 million farmers.

The Minister emphasized adopting AI, ML, Remote Sensing, Robotics, and IoT for sustainable development. He thanked International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics for support and expressed optimism about future collaborations between Karnataka and the UK.

## Wadi schools threaten universal education: Rajashekar

**WADI**

The move to close government schools in villages and replace them with KPS magnet schools is jeopardizing universal education, warned V.N. Rajashekar, state vice-president of the All India Save Education Committee.

Speaking at a teachers' discussion organized by the committee, Rajashekar said the government's plan could lead to the disappearance of primary and upper primary schools in rural areas. He expressed concern that poor and backward children, especially girls, may lose access to quality education.

The state plans to open 6,000 KPS magnet schools, potentially merging or shutting down government schools in at least ten villages under one magnet school. Rajashekar emphasized that such moves threaten the educational rights envisioned by reformers like Jyotirao Phule, Savitribai Phule, and Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar, who fought for education for lower-class children and girls. He criticized the government for gradually eroding the rights of the poor while claiming to provide free education and healthcare. The activist called upon villagers to unite and organize a struggle to save government schools from closure. The discussion was attended by Ramesh Mashal, president of the Save Education Committee Wadi unit; Sharanukumar Doshetty, secretary; and members Veerabhadrappa R.K., Sayabanna Natekar, Iranna Natekar, Padmarekha V.K., and Sita Herura, among others.

Rajashekar's warning comes at a time when rural communities fear losing local schools that serve as lifelines for children's learning and development.

## Woman drowns during workshop at Chikkaballapura resort

**CHIKKABALLAPURA**

A tragic incident occurred near Chintadapi village in Sidlaghatta taluk, Chikkaballapura district, when 37-year-old Rekha from Kundalgurki village drowned in a resort swimming pool and died. Rekha, who worked for an NGO, was attending a two-day workshop at Resort Co. Hotel.

According to witnesses, Rekha jumped into the pool after 6 pm. Though she could swim, she did not resurface for several minutes, prompting colleagues to pull her out. She was immediately rushed to Shidlaghatta Government Hospital, where doctors confirmed her death.

A case has been registered at Shidlaghatta Rural Police Station against the resort owner and the organizing company for negligence, including the lack of safety measures.

The incident was captured on CCTV. Family members have expressed outrage over the mishap. Authorities are investigating to determine responsibility and ensure stricter safety protocols at resorts in the future.

HEATWAVE HEALTH TIPS

# *Stay safe and healthy during summer heat: Mahesh*

**CHIKKABALLAPURA**

As summer temperatures rise, health experts warn about the dangers of heatwaves, dehydration, and sunburn. District Health Officer Dr. Mahesh Kumar advised residents on simple steps to protect themselves from the harsh sun and stay healthy.

Avoiding unnecessary exposure to the sun is the first step. People are advised to stay indoors in cool spaces, use fans, air conditioners, or coolers, and refrain from going outside during peak heat hours. Going out on an empty stomach should also be avoided, as it can lead to dizziness and weakness in strong sunlight.

When leaving the house, wear light-colored, loose clothing, and use caps, towels, or umbrellas to protect skin from direct sun rays. Maintaining proper hydration is crucial during summer. Residents are encouraged to drink at least eight to ten glasses of water daily and include fruits and vegetables in their diet. Coconut water, lemonade, buttermilk, watermelon, and green leafy vegetables help replenish lost fluids, while spicy foods should be limited.

Strenuous outdoor activities should be done only during early morning or evening hours. Bathing twice a day helps maintain skin health. Children and pets should not be allowed to play in the sun during peak heat.

Dr. Mahesh Kumar stressed that anyone experiencing symptoms like excessive fatigue, headache, or fever should immediately contact a doctor.

For further guidance, residents can visit the nearest health center or call the free Health Department helpline at 104. Following these precautions can significantly reduce the risks posed by summer heat and keep families safe.

## QUICK READ

### Power disruption in Karwar due to conductor replacement

**KARWAR**

The Karwar subdivision will carry out conductor replacement work on the Keravadi feeder, causing a power disruption in various areas on February 26 from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm. The Assistant Executive Engineer (V) of the Works and Maintenance Subdivision has requested consumers to cooperate during the scheduled maintenance. Residents are advised to plan their activities accordingly and take necessary precautions during the power outage.

### Quarterly postal Adalat scheduled in Udupi

**UDUPI**

The quarterly Postal Adalat will be conducted at the Udupi Superintendent of Posts' office on March 6. Customers are requested to submit their complaints and suggestions to the Superintendent's office by March 3. They can also be present on the day of the Adalat to have their issues addressed and resolved, according to a notification from the Superintendent of Posts' office.

### Sri Renukacharya Jayanti celebration set for March 1

**KARWAR**

Sri Renukacharya Jayanti program will be held on March 1 at 10 am at the Karnataka State Government Employees' Hall, M.G. Road, Karwar. The event is organized jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and Kannada and Culture Department. Fisheries, Ports, and Inland Waterways Minister Mankala Vaidya will inaugurate, while MLA and KS Marketing Communication President Satish K. Sail will preside. Legislative Council Speaker Basavaraj Horatti, MP Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri, several MLAs and Council members will attend.

# SSLC students reassured ahead of exams

Officers adopted govt schools, focused on 52 low-performing schools, tracked progress, provided solutions, and trained subject resource teachers for improvement

**CHIKKABALLAPURA**

Students preparing for the upcoming SSLC exams in Chikkaballapura need not worry, said Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu. He emphasized that regular practice and focused preparation in the remaining days will help students achieve results that reflect their hard work.

Speaking at a phone-in program organized by the Deputy Director of School Education, he explained that the district administration has already implemented several measures to improve class 10 performance. Special learning classes were conducted before school, during holidays, and even during Dasara vacations. Night schools are also being run in some areas with parental support.

To enhance learning, government schools were adopted by officers from other departments, and 52 schools with low past performance received special attention. District-level officers visited these schools, studied their needs, and provided solutions to improve results. High school head teachers' meetings have been held at both district and taluk levels to track progress and provide feedback. Training sessions for subject resource teachers from Bengaluru division were also conducted. There are 306 high schools in the district, with 15,021 students registered for the SSLC exam this year, including 7,007 government, 2,616 aided, and 5,398 unaided students.

During the "Ask Questions and Solve Problems" Google Meet session, students clarified doubts on exam preparation, syllabus, and exam-day arrangements. Expert teachers, along with the Deputy Commissioner and Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. Y. Naveen Bhat, guided students on facing the exams calmly and confidently.

The district administration assured smooth arrangements at exam centers, emphasizing that consistent effort, not fear, is key to success in the SSLC exams.

# Vijaya cooperative bank opens 70th branch

**Nirani inaugurated the branch, aiming for 100 branches, highlighting the group's legacy, employment, cooperative turnover, deposits, and loan distribution.**

**BIDAR**

MLC Hanamantha Nirani inaugurated the 70th branch of Vijaya Souharda Credit Cooperative here on Wednesday, promising continued support to farmers, small entrepreneurs, and the poor. The branch, located near Sai Cloth next to Papanasha Gate, is part of the Mudhol-based Murugesha Rudrappa Nirani Employment Group's efforts to strengthen the local economy.

Speaking at the ceremony, Nirani said the cooperative aims to reach 100 branches this year, expanding services to all taluk centers in Bidar district.

He highlighted the 32-year legacy of the Nirani Group, which runs 21 companies and provides employment to over 8,000 people.

Vijaya Souharda Cooperative has a business turnover of 45,000 crore, deposits of 3,200 crore, and loans disbursed worth 2,600 crore, distributing 23–25% profit to its members annually. Presiding over the event, MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale emphasized that the computerized core banking branch offers convenient services with interest rates up to 12.5% and advanced payment systems including RTGS, NEFT, and mobile apps.

Guests, including former Speaker Raghunath Rao Malkapure and Humanabad MLA Dr. Siddalingappa Patil, praised the initiative, calling it a gift to the border district ahead of Ugadi.

Religious and cultural performances, including devotional songs by Maheshwari Panchala, marked the celebration. Leaders including Shri Rajeshwar Shivacharya urged the Nirani Group to establish a large sugar or other industrial units in Bidar, citing opportunities for local farmers and employment generation.

*Recalling his NAPAD tenure, he said fertilizer shortages were resolved through efforts with ministers and officials, meeting MP G. Kumar Nayak*

# Cut fertilizer use, protect soil health: Jayavanth

**RAICHUR**

Farmers should slowly reduce the excessive use of chemical fertilizers to protect soil health and ensure steady crop yields, said Patange Jayavanth Rao. He was speaking at an authorized dealers' conference held at the association hall in Raichur.

Jayavanth Rao, president of the Raichur Okkalutana Production Sales and Processing Cooperative Society, stressed the need for balanced and environment-friendly farming methods. He said that healthy soil is the foundation of good farming and long-term productivity. Excessive chemicals may give short-term results but harm the land over time, he warned.

Recalling his time as NAPAD director, he said farmers faced a serious shortage of urea and DAP fertilizers early last year. Through constant efforts with Union ministers and officials, enough fertilizer was supplied to meet the district's needs. A meeting was also held with Raichur-Yadgiri MP G. Kumar Nayak and agriculture officers to improve stocking. He assured farmers that timely fertilizer supply would be ensured next season as well.

Deputy Registrar M.R. Manohar said it is a proud moment that Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited has become a leading fertilizer cooperative in the country. He urged farmers to give priority to soil testing. Using fertilizers based on soil quality will improve crop health and increase yield, he explained.

Farmers and distributors appreciated KRIBHCO products during the event. The conference brought together company representatives, distributors, and progressive farmers, creating a useful platform for discussion and better coordination in the district's agricultural development efforts.

## Kalaburagi employee jailed for bribery case

**KALABURAGI**

A Social Welfare Department employee has been sentenced to four years in prison and fined Rs. 20,000 for accepting a bribe, the Principal District and Special Court ruled.

The accused, Viresh Badigera, working as an SDA in Kalaburagi, was found guilty of demanding a bribe of Rs. 2,000 from Rajashekar Kattimani of Mohanraja Educational Institution. The bribe was allegedly requested to process and forward an application for student scholarships to his superiors.

Following a complaint, the Lokayukta (ACB) police registered a case under Section 7(b) of the Prevention of Corruption Act (PC Act) as Case No. 05/2020. Police Inspector Muhammad Ismail led the investigation and submitted a charge sheet with evidence to the court. During the trial, Judge G.L. Lakshminarayana reviewed the evidence and heard arguments from both sides.

## Constitution empowers women, says Dr. Lanjwadkar

**BIDAR :** The Constitution of India greatly benefits women by protecting their rights and promoting equality, said Dr. Ravindra Lanjwadkar, President of Dasa Sahitya Parishad. He spoke at a special lecture on "Aspirations of the Constitution in Democracy" held at Government First Grade College, Mannali, organized in collaboration with Karnataka Sahitya Academy and Chakora Sahitya Vichar Vedike. Dr. Lanjwadkar highlighted that the Constitution, while detailed and comprehensive, is simple in principle and reflects the aspirations of the people. "It ensures every individual the right to live with dignity," he said, emphasizing its importance in upholding justice and equality. Dharwad lawyer and litterateur Guru Hiremath praised the Indian Constitution as one of the most popular in the world and stressed the need to create constitutional awareness among children.

# Priority on quality jowar in Sindhanur purchase

**SINDHANUR**

A preparatory meeting for the upcoming jowar procurement was held at the Tahsildar's office here on Wednesday, chaired by Lingasuguru Assistant Commissioner Basavanneppa Kal Shetty. Officials were instructed to prioritize quality jowar during the purchase process, which is scheduled to begin in the first week of March.

During the meeting, officials were directed to address transportation and labor issues in advance to prevent delays. Special attention was to be paid to ensure an uninterrupted supply of gunny bags for storing the procured grain. Nodal officers and supervisors at each procurement center were instructed to strictly monitor weights and prevent any discrepancies.

The Assistant Commissioner emphasized the need to avoid problems that occurred during last year's procurement and warned that strict action would be taken against anyone found negligent. Taluk-level officers have been appointed as nodal officers to oversee smooth operations at every center. Tehsildar Arun H. Desai reiterated that the jowar procurement process must be carried out efficiently and transparently, ensuring fair practices and proper quality checks. Farmers and officials alike were advised to cooperate fully to achieve a hassle-free procurement season.

The meeting reflected the administration's commitment to maintaining quality and transparency, with a focus on learning from previous experiences to prevent any lapses this year.

**STAFF SEEK JUSTICE**

# *Anganwadi workers call for Bengaluru March*

**SINDHANUR**

Anganwadi workers and helpers have announced a "Bengaluru Chalo" protest on March 2, demanding higher honorarium and better facilities. The call was given by D.H. Kambali, District Honorary President of the Karnataka State Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Federation (AITUC), during a press meet at Patrika Bhavan in Sindhanur.

Kambali said Anganwadi workers should be paid Rs. 15,000 per month and helpers Rs. 10,000. He also demanded gratuity benefits for workers and helpers who retired after 2011. He objected to forcing Anganwadi staff to handle BLO duties, saying it affects their regular work. Taking action against those who refuse this duty is unfair, he added.

Leaders said the number of children attending Anganwadi centres is falling because LKG and UKG classes are allowed in government and private schools. They demanded that pre-primary classes should instead be started in Anganwadi centres. They also asked the government to increase the amount given for vegetables used in preparing nutritious meals for children.

Federation leaders demanded a hike in dearness allowance, which is now Rs. 30, and its extension to urban workers. They called for timely release of funds under Matruvandan and Bhagyalakshmi schemes and regular rent payment for centres in rented buildings.

Other demands include free medical treatment, paid leave for sick workers, release of funds according to rising egg prices, relaxation in compassionate appointments, and clear guidelines on using Rs. 2,000 given for centre management. Leaders urged the government to respond positively.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

As per the instructions of client **Manoj.G S/o M.Govindaraju,** DoddaTumkuru, Madure Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk. A.M Chickeerappa Advocate, Chickballapur Town publish this notice as under My Client has lost the Original Register Sale deeds dated 02- 11-2000 Vide No: 2090/2000-01. Registered before Sub registrar, Doddaballapur. The original register document was with custody of client. While visited to the Doddaballapur town, the aforesaid original register sale deed was lost. Regarding this accept Police Complaint has also given to the concerned Authority. The Complaint dated 19-02-2026. The concerned police authority have issued the lsot report no. 2070625/2026 in case if the document is noticed or traced by any person's kindly handover to rural Police Station or to my client or to advocate Bangalore rural, Doddaballapur, address please call to the phone No: 8884974445.

**A.M. CHICKKEERAPPA,** B.Sc., LL.B., ADVOCATE
Srinivasa Nilaya, Opp. Prashanthi Bala Mandira
Vapasandra, Chikkaballapura-562 101
Mob: 9845577307
email: amcadvocate@gmail.com

**ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ**

ಸವಿತಾ.ಎಂ.ಕೆ ಕೋಂ.ದೊಡ್ಡಗೌಡ, ನೇರಳೆಪಳ್ಳದೊಡ್ಡಿ ಗ್ರಾಮ, ಉಯ್ಯಂಬಳ್ಳಿ ಹೋಬಳಿ, ಕನಕಪುರ ತಾಲೂಕು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಆದ ನಾನು ಈ ಹಿಂದೆ ನನ್ನ ಹೆಸರು ಹುಟ್ಟಿನಿಂದ ಸುಮಾರು 2015 ರವರೆಗೆ ಅಂದರೆ ನನ್ನ ಎಸ್.ಎಸ್.ಎಲ್.ಸಿ ಅಂಕಪಟ್ಟಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಆಧಾರ್ ಕಾರ್ಡ್ ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನನ್ನ ಹೆಸರು ಚೂಡರತ್ನ.ಎಂ.ಕೆ. ಎಂದು ನಮೂದಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ತದನಂತರ ನನ್ನ ಹೆಸರು ಸವಿತಾ.ಎಂ.ಕೆ ಎಂದು ಎಲ್ಲದಾಖಲಾತಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಯಾಗಿ ಈ ಮೇಲಿನ ಚೂಡರತ್ನ ಎಂ.ಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸವಿತಾ.ಎಂ.ಕೆ ಈ ಎರಡು ಹೆಸರಿನ ಏಕ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯೇ ಆಗಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎಂದು ದೃಢೀಕರಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಇನ್ನು ಮುಂದೆ ನನ್ನ ಹೆಸರು ಎಲ್ಲ ದಾಖಲಾತಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿಮತ್ತು ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕವಾಗಿ ಸವಿತಾ.ಎಂ.ಕೆ ಎಂದು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸಬೇಕೆಂದು ವಿನಂತಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇನೆ.

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**IN THE COURT OF THE SUBORDINATE JUDGE OF METTUPALAYAM**
**HMOP No. 137 OF 2025**

**Manimekalai**, W/o. Suresh, D/o. Nagaraj, Coimbatore District.
... **Petitioner**
-Vs-
**Suresh,** S/o. Jalendran, Santhi Nagara, Kalthodi, Near Nirmithi Kothram, Indavara Village, Chikmangalur, Karnataka - 577-101.
... **Respondent**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Petitioner has filed the above-mentioned **HMOP No.137 of 2025** U/s.13(1)(ia)(ib) in the Honourable Subordinate Court of Mettupalayam, seeking the remedy of divorce from the Respondent. The said petition has been posted for hearing on **27.03.2026** for the appearance of the Respondent. Therefore, the Respondent is requested to appear before the Honourable Subordinate Court of Mettupalayam on the said date at **10.30 AM,** either in person or through a legal counsel. It is hereby notified that in case of failure to appear before the Honourable Subordinate Court of Mettupalayam on **27.03.2026,** the said petition will be decided ex-parte against the Respondent.

**P. Dinesh Kumar, B.Sc., L.L.B., K. Elango, B.A., B.L., Advocates,**
Mettupalayam, Coimbatore,
**88257 - 97701,**
dineshadv611@gmail.com

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, DIPAK RAY S/o DILIP CHANDRA MALAKAR R/o Flat No.A204, Thirumala Sunidhi Desire Aprt, Begur Main Road, Near St.Francis School, Next to IOC Petrol Bunk, Hongasandra, Begur, Bommanahalli, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560068, have changed the name of my minor son DEVANSH RAY aged 13 years and he shall hereafter be known as DEEPANSHU RAY.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, PUSHPA BASAVANTHAPPA GUDI W/o MARUTI MANGALORE, R/o 5/7601, Sardhar Street, Opp Bandi Durgamma Temple, Jawahar Road, Koppal, Karnataka-583231, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as G B PUSHPA.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, CHANNABASAPPA GANGASHETTI S/o KASHINATH R/o 64, Magadi Main Road, Near Smart School, Varma Layout, Machohalli, Bapagrama, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560091, have changed the name of my minor son CHETHAN aged 14 years and he shall hereafter be known as SHANKAR GANGASHETTY.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, SONAL NICHILAS MATHIAS alias SONAL M MATHIAS alias SONAL MICHELLE MATHIAS W/o NICHOLAS AGNELO MATHIAS, R/o 30, NTI Layout, 2nd Main, Bhoopasandra, R.M.V. Extension II Stage, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560094, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SONAL MATHIAS.

**AFFIDAVIT**

I, ALTAF PASHA S/o Abdul Vajid, R/at No.1823/1, 7th Cross, 1st Floor, Chamundeshwari Badavane, Gandhinagar, Tiptur Town, Tumkur Dist, Karnatka-572201, do hereby may Correct name is Altaf Pasha, But in Passport wrongly mentioned as Althaf Pasha. Hence request Concerned authority to change my name from Althaf Pasha to Altaf Pasha in Passport. Vide Affidavit dated: 17-02-2026. Sworn before Notary K.R.UMESH, Tiptur.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, HARISH H C S/o CHANNAIAH R/o No 1/1/2, Channakeshava Nilaya, 4th cross, Near Bharath Medical, Kengeri Puttaiah Badavane, Kodigehalli, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560091, have changed the name of my minor son HRITHIK H H aged 13 years and he shall hereafter be known as HARIHARAPRASAD H.

## QUICK READ

### Kerala LoP Satheesan questions 'attack' claim by Health Min

**Kannur**

Leader of the Opposition, V.D. Satheesan, on Wednesday cast serious doubts over the alleged attack on Health Minister Veena George at Kannur railway station by the Kerala Students Union (KSU), saying a preliminary enquiry by the Congress found no evidence of any physical assault. Our preliminary probe reveals that no protester even reached anywhere near the Minister. There were 35 police officials and just four KSU workers when she arrived at the Kannur railway platform. There would have been a protest, but no attack took place, Satheesan said.

### 3 youths arrested with large haul of US dollars in Kolkata

**Kolkata**

Three youths possessing $450,000 (over Rs 4 crore) were arrested from Kolkata's Park Street area, police said on Wednesday. The youths were arrested from the Park Street police station area, police said, adding that an investigation has been launched. The arrested youths were to be produced before a court. According to police sources, the names of the arrested youths are Sayan Das, Mohammad Asad, and Feroz Khan. All three are said to be residents of Mumbai. Officers of Park Street police station saw the three men roaming around suspiciously. On becoming suspicious, the police officers questioned them. After that, their bags were checked, and the US dollars, arranged in layers, were recovered.

### Ahmedabad Airport holds multi-agency mock drill

**Ahmedabad**

A full-scale mock exercise simulating an earthquake and its cascading impacts was conducted at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad on Wednesday to test emergency response systems and inter-agency coordination during natural disasters. The disaster management drill was organised by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in coordination with the Airports Authority of India (AAI), the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) at the Integrated Cargo Terminal. The multi-hazard scenario exercise was designed to assess preparedness levels and the effectiveness of coordinated action in the event of a major seismic incident affecting critical infrastructure.

# TRIPURA CM CALLS FOR TIGHTER BORDER VIGIL

Chief Minister urges enhanced coordination among forces to curb cross-border crimes.

**AGARTHALA**

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Wednesday emphasised the need to further strengthen coordination among various security agencies, including the Border Security Force (BSF) and Tripura Police, to tighten surveillance along the India-Bangladesh border.

Addressing the Police Week function at the Manoranjan Debbarma Memorial Stadium on the outskirts of Agartala, the Chief Minister underlined that seamless cooperation between the BSF and state police is crucial to ensuring effective security in border villages and preventing cross-border crimes.

Tripura shares an 856-km-long international border with Bangladesh and is surrounded on three sides by the neighbouring country, making the state particularly vulnerable to smuggling, illegal infiltration, human trafficking and migration-related challenges.

Saha, who also holds the Home portfolio, noted that the state police force has been working with distinction in maintaining law and order. He highlighted their role in curbing criminal activities, intensifying anti-drug operations, preventing road accidents and addressing public safety concerns across the state. Expressing confidence in the force, he said he firmly believes that the Tripura Police will continue its journey of excellence with dedication, integrity and professionalism in the years ahead.

On the occasion of Tripura Police Week 2026, the Chief Minister inspected the ceremonial parade and paid homage to brave police personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty. He acknowledged their courage and sacrifice while performing responsibilities under challenging circumstances.

The Chief Minister further stated that Tripura has emerged as one of the leading states in the country in maintaining a stable law and order situation. He attributed the improved security scenario to coordinated policing and enhanced infrastructure development within the department. According to him, the state has witnessed an 8.3 per cent reduction in crime rate over the past two decades. He added that police efforts have been intensified to modernise infrastructure, upgrade surveillance systems and strengthen community policing initiatives, contributing to greater public confidence and a significant rise in tourist footfall in recent years.

**KEY POINTS**

- Enhanced border security coordination
- 856-km border with Bangladesh
- Crime rate reduced by 8.3%
- Focus on curbing cyber and drug crimes
- Police infrastructure and fleet upgraded

# 'Law and order collapsed, criminals running amok in Bihar'

**PATNA**

Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Tejashwi Yadav on Wednesday launched a blistering attack on the Nitish Kumar government over the deteriorating law and order situation in Bihar.

Speaking to reporters outside the Bihar Legislative Assembly premises, Tejashwi alleged that murders are taking place daily across the state and that the government has completely lost control over criminals.

Criminals have become completely unbridled. Whoever feels like shooting is shooting. The people of Bihar are living in fear, he said, adding that the government has lost all credibility in maintaining law and order.

Tejashwi pointed out that despite having a Chief Minister and two Deputy Chief Ministers, no one is willing to take responsibility for controlling crime.

# Hoarding collapse: Odisha CM announces Rs 4L aid for victims' kin

**BHUBANESWAR**

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday announced an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh each for the next of kin of two persons who died after an advertising hoarding collapsed on them in Bhubaneswar. According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), the Chief Minister expressed deep sorrow over the tragic deaths of Tuna Gouda and Sachidananda Pradhan, who were killed after a hoarding collapsed on them in the Aiginia area of the city. The Chief Minister also announced financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh each from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) for the families of the deceased. As per reports, a Nor'wester brought a sudden change in weather conditions, accompanied by intense winds and heavy rainfall, which caused widespread disruption in Bhubaneswar. Due to strong winds, a large advertising hoarding installed near the Aiginia Durga Mandap collapsed suddenly, killing two persons and damaging several nearby shops. Local residents present at the spot rescued the victims trapped under the hoarding and rushed them to Capital Hospital, where doctors declared them brought dead. On being informed, police and fire services personnel reached the spot and cleared the road that had been blocked due to the collapsed hoarding. Meanwhile, family members and relatives of the deceased staged a protest on Wednesday by blocking the National Highway at Aiginia, expressing anger over the incident and demanding justice.

The protest disrupted normal traffic movement and caused inconvenience to commuters travelling along the busy route. The blockade was later lifted after senior police officials and local administration representatives reached the spot and held discussions with the aggrieved families.

The authorities assured the families of all necessary assistance and administrative support. Following these assurances, the protesting families agreed to withdraw the blockade, restoring normal traffic movement in the area.

# 'Renaming of MGNREGA an attempt to weaken social security provisions'

**CHANDIGARH**

The Indian National Congress in Haryana on Wednesday staged a protest against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, alleging attempts to rename and dilute the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The party accused the government of weakening social security protections meant for the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society.

Senior leaders, including party in-charge B. K. Hariprasad, former Chief

Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, state president Rao Narender Singh, and MP Deepender Singh Hooda, joined workers and supporters in a march from the Congress office towards the Assembly. Police stopped the procession midway and detained several leaders as protesters raised slogans, waved placards, and accused the government of adopting dictatorial measures to undermine the scheme.

Addressing party workers, Hooda alleged that the BJP has weakened the rights of Dalits, backward classes, economically weaker sections, and rural communities. Citing a parliamentary reply, he claimed that although over 8 lakh workers are registered under MGNREGA in Haryana, only 2,100 families received 100 days of work in 2024–25, with no compensation provided as mandated.


## NAME AND ADDRESS CHANGE

I, **ANDLURI LAKSHMI DEVI**, (OLD NAME SPELLING), Passport Holder No. G7531897 issued on 14/02/2008, at Hyderabad, R/o. 2-471-3, Thilak Nagar, Akkayapalli, Kadapa Dist, Andhra Pradesh, INDIA have been change my name spelling as **ANDULURU LAKSHMI DEVI (New Name Spelling)**

I, **ANDULURU LAKSHMI DEVI,** W/o. ANDULURU BALAGANGI REDDY, Now I change my Address : R/o. 2-471-3, Thilak Nagar, Akkayapalli, Kadapa Dist, Andhra Pradesh, INDIA (Old Address) TO #05, 3rd cross, Dinesh Reddy PG For Gents, Chikka Begur Road, Singasandra, Bengaluru – 560068, Karnataka, India (New Address)

ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಅಭಿಯಾನ
**ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಸೊಸೈಟಿ (ರಿ), ಮೈಸೂರು**
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ನಜರಾಬಾದ್, ಮೈಸೂರು.
ದೂರವಾಣಿ : 0821-2441988, ಇ-ಮೇಲ್: dhomysore@gmail.com/rchomysore@gmail.com

ಸಂ: ಎನ್.ಹೆಚ್.ಎಂ/ಜಿ.ಆ.ಸೊ/ಆರ್.ಸಿ.ಹೆಚ್/ಮೈ/67/2025-26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 25.02.2026

**ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ**

ಮೈಸೂರು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಅಭಿಯಾನ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಡಿ 2025-26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿಗೆ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳಿಗೆ ಹೊರಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ಚಾಲಕ ಸಹಿತ ವಾಹನ ಸೇವೆಯನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯಲು ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಡಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಷೆಡ್ಯೂಲ್ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತಿದೆ.

| ಸಂ. | ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ | ವಿಭಾಗ/ಸ್ಥಳ | ಅನುಮೋದನೆ ಗೊಂಡಿರುವ ವಾಹನಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ | ROP ಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಮೋದನೆ ಗೊಂಡಿರುವ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಬಾಲ ಸ್ವಾಸ್ಥ್ಯ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ | ಮೈಸೂರು(ನಗರ)-04, ಮೈಸೂರು(ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ)-03, ನಂಜನಗೂಡು-03, ಟಿ. ನರಸಿಪುರ-02, ಹೆಚ್.ಡಿ. ಕೋಟೆ-02, ಪಿರಿಯಾಪಟ್ಟಣ-02, ಕೆ.ಆರ್.ನಗರ-02, ಹುಣಸೂರು-02 | 20 | 35,000/- |
| 2 | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಘಟಕ | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರ್.ಸಿ.ಹೆಚ್ ಕಛೇರಿ. ಮೈಸೂರು. | 01 | 40,000/- |
| 3 | ನಗರ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಘಟಕ | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರ್.ಸಿ.ಹೆಚ್ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಮೈಸೂರು. | 01 | 40,000/- |
| 4 | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ತಂಬಾಕು ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣ ಕೋಶ | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸರ್ವೇಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ ಮೈಸೂರು. | 01 | 40,000/- |
| 5 | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕ್ಷಯರೋಗ ನಿರ್ಮೂಲನಾ ಘಟಕ | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕ್ಷಯರೋಗ ನಿರ್ಮೂಲನಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಮೈಸೂರು. | 01 | 40,000/- |
| 6 | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಗುಣಮಟ್ಟ ಖಾತರಿ ವಿಭಾಗ | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಮೈಸೂರು. | 01 | 40,000/- |
| 7 | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕುಷ್ಠರೋಗ ನಿರ್ಮೂಲನಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕುಷ್ಠರೋಗ ನಿರ್ಮೂಲನಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಮೈಸೂರು. | 01 | 40,000/- |
| 8 | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಾನಸಿಕ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಕುಷ್ಠರೋಗ ನಿರ್ಮೂಲನಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಮೈಸೂರು. | 01 | 35,000/- |
| 9 | ಐ.ಇ.ಸಿ. ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ | ವಿಭಾಗೀಯ ಜಂಟಿ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರ ಕಛೇರಿ ಮೈಸೂರು. | 01 | 40,000/- |
| 10 | ಎನ್.ವಿ.ಬಿ.ಡಿ.ಸಿ.ಪಿ. ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ | ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ರೋಗವಾಹಕ ಆಶ್ರಿತ ರೋಗಗಳ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಮೈಸೂರು. | 01 | 40,000/- |

**ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ ವೇಳಾಪಟ್ಟಿ: 1)** ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: NHM/DHS/RCH/MYS/67/2025-26. **2)** ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ ಮೊತ್ತ **ರೂ. 1,26,60,000/-. 3)** ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.: **2,53,200/-. 4)** ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವೆಬ್ ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭದ ದಿನಾಂಕ : **02.03.2026 ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 10:30 ಗಂಟೆ. 5)** ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 07.03.2026 ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 10:30 ಗಂಟೆ 6)** ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: **13.03.2026 ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ 05:30 ಗಂಟೆ. 7)** ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: **20.03.2026 ರಂದು ಅಪರಾಹ್ನ 12:30 ಗಂಟೆ. 8)** ಹಣಕಾಸು ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ:**27.03.2026 ರಂದು ಮಧ್ಯಾಹ್ನ 03:00 ಗಂಟೆ. 9)** ಮೂಲ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳ ಪರಿಶೀಲನೆ ತಿಳಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು. **10)** ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ಸ್ಥಳ : **ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ನಜರ್‌ಬಾದ್, ಮೈಸೂರು.**

ಸಹಿ/- **ಸದಸ್ಯ ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿಗಳು**
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಸೊಸೈಟಿ ಮೈಸೂರು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಮೈಸೂರು.

DIPR/MYS/1751/SA/2025-26

**BANGALORE RURAL ZILLA PANCHAYATH**
Office of Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Bangalore Rural, Anand Rao Circle, Bangalore - 560009.

No: EE/PRED/BNG(R)/TND No-18/TS/2025-26 Date: 18.02.2026

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION No.18/2025-26**
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Short Term Tender is invited through KPP Portal by the Executive Engineer, P.R.E.D, Bangalore Rural, under TND No. 18 - Hon'ble Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Scheme (CMIDP) Head of Account. The work details can be obtained from the KPP Portal **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).** The Tender Documents can be obtained and submitted on or before **02.03.2026 upto 4.00 P.M.** Further details contact this office during office working hours.

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,**
**Panchayat Raj Engineering Division,**
**Bangalore Rural Dist. Bangalore**

DIPR/CP/5865/SMCL/2025-26

**MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED**
FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD
CIN : U65923KL2010PLC039179
**Regd Office:** 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherppu - Thriprayar Road, Thriprayar, Thrissur, Kerala 680567 | **Phone No.:** 0487-3520504, **Website:** www.manappuramhomefin.com

**CORRIGENDUM**

Possession Notice of our borrower **RAMESH N** published in this newspaper on **19/02/2026** in which description of Loan details was not mentioned as which shall be read as,

**POSSESSION NOTICE** (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of **Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN")** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest *[Act], 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic** possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said *[Act] read with rule 9 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:

| Sr. No. | Name of Borrower and Co-borrower / Loan account number/ Branch | Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created | Date of Demand Notice sent & Outstanding Amount | Date of Possession |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ramesh N, Shilpa T, Ananda C, **/NHL00340026121/** Mysore | Property No. 33/2, Pl.D. No.152200300115900070, Haramballikoppalu Village & Hosaagrahara Gp & KR Nagara Taluk, Mysore District, Karnataka, Pin: 571601. Total Measuring 51.19 Sq Meters. East-House Belongs To Kalaiah, West-House Belongs To Shanthamma Parasaiah, South-Road, North-House Belongs To Nagaiah | 07-11-2025 & Rs.714661/- | 14-02-2026 |

**Date: 26th February 2026 | Place: KARNATAKA** **Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd**

HDFC securities | 25 YEARS
Powering India's Investments

**HDFC SECURITIES LIMITED**
**Regd Office:** Office Floor 8, I think Techno Campus Building B- Alpha, Kanjurmarg (E), Mumbai-400042.
(CIN No. U67120MH2000PLC152193)
Website: www.hdfcsec.com

**Public Notice**

This is to inform the public at large, that certain WhatsApp/Telegram/ Facebook/Instagram and other social networking application based groups are wrongfully using the brand name, logo of HDFC Securities Limited (HSL) along with the names and pictures of senior officials of HSL to deceive the general public into believing that the group is associated with HSL.

Investors and general public are informed through this notice that HSL does not have any association and/or relation, directly or indirectly with such unauthorized groups in any capacity. HSL has identified an imposter named **'Sunita Agarwal'** who is falsely claiming association with HSL and our MD & CEO **Mr. Dhiraj Relli** and operating through a Whatsapp group named **'[F-163] HDFC Securities Limited'** using the numbers **7464987073, 7541015958 and 8438745345**. HSL will not be liable in any manner whatsoever of the financial losses and/or consequences of dealing with such above mentioned groups. Please note that any person/s dealing with such groups will be doing so at their own risk and responsibility.

Mumbai,
February 25, 2026

Government of Karnataka
**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION KALABURAGI**

No : EE/PRED/KLB/KKRDB /TS-5/2025-26/6335 Date : 24/02/2026

**:: SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION ::**
**(Through E-procurement Two Cover System)**

1) Name of work: Construction of Class Rooms to Primary and High Schools Various 23 Villages in Chittapur Constituency under KKRDB 2025-26 & 2026-27 Akshar Avishkar Head of Account Indent No. as follow (1) 24830 (2) 24736 (3) 24832 (4) 24746 (5) 24748 (6) 24710 (7) 24709 (8) 24747 **Total 8 Works**, 2) Head of account: **KKRDB for the year 2025-26 & 2026-27**, 3) Amount put to tender: **Minimum Rs. 1,10,04,512.31, Maximum Rs. 1,38,41,360.10,** 4) Class of Contractor: Class- III and Above, 5) Issue of Blank Tender Documents: **25-02-2026 to 16-03-2026 upto 4.00 pm**, 6) Tender Form Fee: As per KPPP Norms, 7) E.M.D. Fee: Minimum Rs. 2,00,000.00, Maximum Rs. 2,08,000.00, 8) Receipt of completed tender documents: **25-02-2026 to 16-03-2026 upto 4.00 pm,** 9) Technical Bid Opening Date: **17-03-2026 After 4.00 pm**, 10) Financial Bid opening Date: **20-03-2026 After 11.00 am,** 11) For more details contact: Office of the Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Opp: Karnataka Grameen Bank (PKGB) Head office, Kusnoor Road, Rajapur Kalaburagi, 12) Website Address: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer**
DIPR/Kalaburagi/1118/KSMC&A/2025-26 **Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Kalaburagi**

**Government of Karnataka**
**PUBLIC WORKS, DEPARTMENT**
**Office of the Executive Engineer,**
**Chamarajanagara Division, Chamarajanagara**
**E-mail: eecnr@kpwd.gov.in/ pwdeechngr@gmail.com Phone/Fax: 08226-222027**

**BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION**
**(Through Kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal only)**
**H(Two Cover System: Section-1-Technical Bid and Section-2-Financial Bid)**
**Short Term Tender Notification No 33/2025-26 Dated:23.02.2026 (Call-1, 2, 3, 6 & Call-7)**

Item rate tenders are invited through Kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal only on behalf of Governer of Karnataka from Eligible registered civil Contractor in KPWD in Standard Bid document **KW-1, KW-2 KW-3 & KW-4** form The Total no of works is 3, **H/A :- 2059-80- 053-4-00-200 PWD Building Repair Works** Minimum estimated cost is Rs, 7.60 lakhs, maximum estimated cost is Rs, 14.13 lakhs, The Total no of works is 20, **H/A - 2216-07-053-0-01-200 Qutres Repair Works** Minimum estimated cost is Rs, 2.80 lakhs, maximum estimated cost is Rs, 16.50 lakhs, The Total no of works is 1, **H/A :- 8443 DC Works** maximum estimated cost is Rs, 4.11 lakhs, The Total no of works is 4, **H/A :- 3054-03-337-0-05-200 SH Maintenance (Road Conductor) Works** Minimum estimated cost is Rs, 9.50 lakhs, maximum estimated cost is Rs, 13.48 lakhs, The Total no of works is 4, **H/A :- 3054-04-337-0-01-200 MDR Maintenance (Road Conductor) Works** Minimum estimated cost is Rs, 6.24 lakhs, maximum estimated cost is Rs, 31.20 lakhs, The Total no of works is 3, **H/A :- 5054-80-190-0-01-132 Kalasanka Works** Minimum estimated cost is Rs. 35.00 lakhs, maximum estimated cost is Rs, 70.00 lakhs, The Total no of works is 2, **H/A :- 4059-80-051-0-60-132 CM Infrastructure Development Projects Capital Expenditures Works** Minimum estimated cost is Rs, 150.00 lakhs, & maximum estimated cost is Rs, 200.00 lakhs, **AND** The Total no of works is 1, **H/A :- 5054-04-337-0-01- ORF Works** maximum estimated cost is Rs, 500.00 lakhs, Further changes in this Notification will be published in Kppp.karnataka.gov.in Only. Date of events as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Date and Time for downloading the tender document from the Kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal | From 26.02.2026 to 09.03.2026 upto 16.30 Hrs. |
| 2 | Pre-Bid Meeting Date | 04.03.2026 in Division Office Meeting Hall at 11.00 AM |
| 3 | downloading the tender document from the Last Date and Time | 09.03.2026 Up to 16.30 Hrs. |
| 4 | Date & Time for opening of Technical bid | 10.03.2026 after 16.30 Hrs. |
| 5 | Date & Time for opening of Financial bid | 11.03.2026 after 16.30 Hrs. |

More information can be had from the web site: **https://www.Kppp.karnataka.gov.in** & Any other details required can be obtained from office of the under signed during office hours.

**NO DIPR CHANAGAR: 739:2025-26**

**Executive Engineer**
**PWD Division, Chamarajanagar**

## QUICK READ

### 4 held for IDFC First Bank fraud involving govt departments

**CHANDIGARH**

Haryana Director General of Anti-Corruption Bureau, Arshinder Singh Chawla, on Wednesday said four accused were arrested in the IDFC First Bank fraud case involving government departments as the money was transferred to the Swastik Desh project, a private firm owned by some of the accused. They have been identified as Ribhav Rishi, Abhishek Singla, Abhay Kumar and Swati Singla. A letter was received on February 23 regarding embezzlement of Panchayat Department funds, and a case was registered following government orders, he told the media in Panchkula, in Haryana.

### BMC unveils Rs 4,248 crore education budget for 2026-27

**MUMBAI**

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Wednesday presented its education budget for the financial year 2026-27, proposing a total outlay of Rs 4,248.08 crore, an increase over the 2025-26 budget of Rs 3,674 crore. The budget, presented by Additional Municipal Commissioner (Eastern Suburbs) Dr Avinash Dhakne, marks a historic return to democratic processes, being the first in four years presented before an elected general body of corporators rather than an administrator. The budget is divided into two primary streams to balance daily operations with long-term infrastructure. The total outlay is Rs 4,248.08 crore for overall education sector funding.

### Jindal Global Law School hosts LSGL Deans' Meeting 2026

**SONIPAT**

The Jindal Global Law School (JGLS) of O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) hosted the four-day prestigious Law Schools Global League (LSGL) Deans' Meeting and Academic Conference recently. The 2026 conference was organised around the theme Law and the Digital Future: Reimagining Global Legal Education, reflecting the profound and accelerating impact of artificial intelligence and digital technologies on legal systems, legal practice, and the foundations of legal pedagogy worldwide. It brought together 40 Deans and senior academics from 24 leading universities and law schools across the world, reaffirming JGLS's role as a global convenor of legal scholarship, institutional leadership, and transformative dialogue on the future of law.

# Delhi CM assures action over 'racial abuse' of Arunachal women

She asserted that any misconduct against people from the Northeast residing in the national capital will not be tolerated

**NEW DELHI**

The alleged racial harassment of three women from Arunachal Pradesh in South Delhi's Malviya Nagar has sparked outrage, prompting swift action from authorities and a strong response from the Delhi government.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday took cognisance of the incident and asserted that any misconduct against people from the Northeast residing in the national capital will not be tolerated.

The case pertains to an altercation that reportedly took place on February 20 in the Malviya Nagar area. The three women, who were living in a rented accommodation, were allegedly subjected to racial slurs, humiliation and intimidation by their neighbours, identified as Harsh Singh and Ruby Jain. According to reports, the confrontation arose following a dispute over repair work at the women's residence. During the argument, the accused allegedly used derogatory language and referred to the women as dhandhewali (sex worker), causing distress and outrage.

Acting on the complaint, Delhi Police arrested the accused couple five days after the alleged incident. Officials confirmed that relevant provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act have been invoked based on the material available on record.

In a video message posted on X, the Chief Minister said the matter had come to her attention after several influencers tagged her in posts highlighting the incident. She stated that she would soon meet the affected women and extend her support. Emphasising inclusivity, Gupta said that residents from all parts of the country, including the Northeast, enjoy equal rights in Delhi and contribute significantly to the city's growth and vibrancy.

Reiterating her government's firm stance, she assured that those responsible would face severe punishment. She also expressed her intent to engage with members of the Northeast community in Delhi to understand their concerns and explore policy measures, if required. Meanwhile, officials said the investigation is being conducted by an ACP-rank officer and is under close supervision of senior authorities, with further inquiries currently underway.

# Maha tops in National Suposhit GP Abhiyaan rankings

**MUMBAI**

Maharashtra has emerged as the top-performing state in the national 'Suposhit Gram Panchayat Abhiyaan', with 192 Gram Panchayats securing positions among the top 1,000 performing Panchayats across the country.

Announcing the achievement on Wednesday, Maharashtra Minister of Women and Child Welfare Aditi Tatkare described it as a milestone reflecting the state's strong commitment to improving nutrition outcomes at the grassroots level.

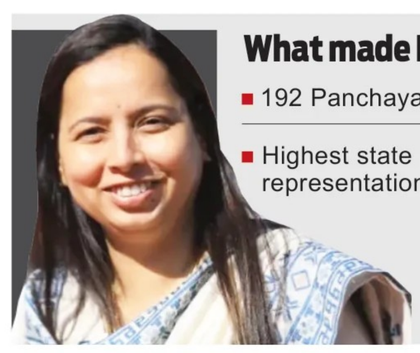
The Suposhit Gram Panchayat Abhiyaan is a nationwide initiative aimed at strengthening nutritional indicators by converging the efforts of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), health departments, local self-governments and community stakeholders. The campaign focuses on reducing malnutrition, improving maternal and child health, strengthening Anganwadi services and ensuring last-mile delivery of nutrition interventions.

According to Minister Tatkare, Maharashtra's success is the result of coordinated action, robust monitoring mechanisms and active community participation. She credited the dedicated work of ICDS officers, supervisors, Anganwadi workers and frontline functionaries across districts for achieving the distinction. Focused interventions under POSHAN Abhiyaan, strengthened growth monitoring, behavioural change communication and targeted outreach to vulnerable beneficiaries have played a pivotal role in driving measurable progress.

The minister congratulated officers and field staff for their sustained efforts and reiterated the government's resolve to build a 'Suposhit Maharashtra' through continued policy support, innovation and accountability. She noted that the achievement not only establishes a national benchmark but also serves as motivation to intensify nutrition-focused initiatives across the state.

Officials from the department highlighted that the Abhiyaan acts as a catalyst for sustainable change by encouraging innovative and community-driven approaches to tackle malnutrition. Key interventions include the use of millets in Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) and Take Home Ration (THR), development of Poshan Vatikas or nutri-gardens in Anganwadi Centres, and promoting diet diversity through locally available food.

Best practices emerging from Anganwadi Centres are regularly documented and disseminated for wider adoption, ensuring that successful models are replicated across districts. With the highest representation in the national rankings, Maharashtra has reinforced its leadership in advancing grassroots nutrition reforms and community-led development.



**What made Maharashtra tops**

- 192 Panchayats in top 1000
- Highest state representation
- Focus on reducing malnutrition
- Community-driven nutrition initiatives

## Urban administration not given free hand: MP LoP

**BHOPAL**

Leader of Opposition in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, Umang Singhar, on Wednesday alleged that several key urban master plans in the state have been deliberately delayed, accusing the government of administrative paralysis and internal tussle.

Targeting the Mohan Yadav government, Singhar questioned why master plans for major cities such as Indore, Bhopal and Gwalior have not been implemented.

Why have these master plans been delayed? Why does the Chief Minister not want them implemented? Residents of Indore and Bhopal are facing difficulties due to this prolonged delay, he said. He was speaking to reporters on the eighth day of the ongoing Budget Session of the Assembly.

Singhar further alleged that an internal tussle between the Chief Minister and Urban Affairs Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya has stalled the approval process.

Urban administration is not being given a free hand, nor are concrete decisions being taken. As a result, master plans for major cities have remained pending for nearly a year and a half, he claimed.

The Congress leader said that while master plans for cities like Indore and Bhopal have not been cleared for nearly two years, illegal colonies continue to mushroom unchecked. The differences between the Chief Minister and the Urban Affairs Minister have become evident even inside the Assembly. Either ministers should be given full authority to function or they should resign.

## Maharashtra forms task force to study digital addiction

**MUMBAI**

Amid growing concerns over the adverse effects of excessive screen time and social media usage among children, the Maharashtra government on Wednesday announced the formation of an expert Task Force to examine digital addiction and recommend corrective measures. State Information Technology Minister Ashish Shelar informed the Legislative Council that a comprehensive report will be submitted before the commencement of the next Assembly session.

The announcement followed a Calling Attention motion raised by MLCs Niranjan Davkhare and Sanjay Kenekar, who flagged the increasing risks associated with social media addiction among minors and youth. Several other legislators, including Pravin Darekar, Chitra Wagh, Bhai Jagtap and Uma Khapre, participated in the discussion. They sought clarity on whether the government intends to introduce age limits for gaming applications and social media platforms, and whether restrictions would be imposed on digital advertisements specifically targeting children.

Minister Shelar stated that written directives were issued on February 2, 2026, to Virendra Singh, Principal Secretary of the IT Department, instructing him to constitute the Task Force. The panel will comprise educationists, psychiatrists, child counsellors, technology experts, management consultants, doctors, legal experts and senior government officials to ensure a multidisciplinary approach.

Highlighting the scale of the issue, Shelar noted that Maharashtra has nearly four crore children below the age of 18, with around three crore under the age of 15. He described their mental and physical well-being as a matter of serious public importance, underscoring the urgency of policy intervention.

The minister further announced that a committee comprising members from both Houses of the legislature would also be formed to deliberate on the findings and policy recommendations.

According to the mandate outlined by the government, the Task Force will conduct an in-depth study covering child protection and digital safety, the impact of digital exposure on mental health and education.

# IEDs, Chinese grenades, pistol recovered in J&K's Poonch

**JAMMU**

The joint security forces on Wednesday recovered Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), arms and ammunition in the forests of Jammu and Kashmir's Pooch district. Nagrota-headquartered White Knight Corps of the Army said in a post on X that, based on intelligence inputs, a joint operation was launched in the Gani forest area of Poonch, where weapons were found in a cave.

The action was taken under the code name Operation Gani. Based on synergised intelligence inputs from own sources and @JmuKmrPolice, a Joint Operation was launched by the troops of White Knight Corps and SOG Poonch in the Gani Forest area of Poonch. Displaying precision in coordination, the

detailed search led to recovery of a terrorist cache concealed beneath a natural cave, the post read.

The Army said that one big IED weighing 4.5 kg, one small IED of 800 gm, two Chinese grenades, one 9 mm pistol, two 9 mm rounds and twenty-two 7.62 mm rounds were recovered from the site.

The IEDs and grenades were destroyed in situ by the Bomb Disposal Team, ensuring the safety of civilians and troops.

The hunt continues....We Serve, We Protect! the Army concluded in the X post. The police said a case has been registered in this connection at the Mendhar Police Station.

This comes after the joint security forces successfully eliminated three Pakistan-supported terrorists in the forest area of Kishtwar district under Operation TRASHI-I

The J&K Police and other security forces carry out anti-terrorist operations in the hinterland, while the Army and the Border Security Force (BSF) guard the Line of Control (LoC) and the international border (IB) respectively.

Jammu and Kashmir has a 740 km-long LoC and a 240 km-long IB.

The LoC is situated in Kupwara, Bandipora and Baramulla districts of the Valley and in Poonch, Rajouri and partly in Jammu district of the Jammu region.

## Prez Murmu hails AYUSH medicine's role in health

**NEW DELHI**

Ayush systems offer not merely treatment but a comprehensive lifestyle framework based on balanced diet, daily and seasonal regimens, yoga, meditation and natural therapies, President Droupadi Murmu said on Wednesday.

She noted that the world increasingly recognises that true wellness requires harmony between body and mind.

Preventive and holistic healthcare is essential for reducing disease burden and promoting long-term wellbeing, President Murmu while inaugurating the 'National Arogya Fair 2026' at Shegaon in Buldhana district, Maharashtra, organised by the Ministry of Ayush in collaboration with the All India Ayurvedic Congress.

She emphasised that Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy have made invaluable contributions in preventive, promotive and curative healthcare and continue to guide society towards balanced living.

President Murmu further highlighted that India possesses a rich heritage of medicinal plants and traditional knowledge.

Stressing the importance of conservation and scientific cultivation of medicinal plants, she said that strengthening the raw material base would support sustainable healthcare, enhance farmers' incomes and protect the environment. She called for collective efforts to advance Ayush systems and build a 'Healthy and Empowered India'. Maharashtra Governor Acharya Devvrat described Ayurveda as a timeless scientific tradition established by India's ancient Rishis, whom he referred to as the earliest research scholars.

He emphasised that the human body, composed of the five elements, can be healed best through alignment with nature and that preventive healthcare is superior to curative approaches.

India's traditional systems are deeply scientific and rooted in centuries of experiential knowledge.

Devvrat urged practitioners to uphold authenticity, ensure quality in medicines and maintain unwavering faith in their own disciplines. He congratulated the Ministry of Ayush for strengthening India's traditional knowledge systems at national and global levels.

According to Ayush Minister Prataprao Jadhav, this grand congregation brings together policymakers, researchers, academicians, industry representatives, farmers and practitioners on one common platform.

'ABSOLUTELY CORRECT'

# *Jamaat chief backs Priyanka on Gaza remarks*

**BAREILLY**

All India Muslim Jamaat (AIMJ) president Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi Barelvi has expressed support for Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for raising the Gaza-Palestine issue, while also cautioning Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu amid allegations of corruption and ongoing legal proceedings.

Maulana Razvi said that Priyanka Gandhi handled the Gaza issue appropriately and

spoke in favour of justice.

He stated that she has consistently stood with the oppressed, particularly the people of Gaza, and has raised her voice in support of Palestinian rights on multiple occasions.

According to him, her position reflects a humanitarian concern for those affected by the ongoing conflict.

At the same time, Razvi clarified that he would not describe Prime Minister Modi as anti-Muslim, noting that the Prime Minister maintains cordial relations with Arab nations, Muslim-majority countries and Indian Muslims. However, he argued that given the prevailing global circumstances, the Prime Minister should have avoided meeting Netanyahu. He referred to allegations of corruption against the Israeli leader and ongoing cases in Israel's Supreme Court, as well as international legal scrutiny, stating that such developments warranted caution.

Razvi further alleged that Israel has consistently acted against Muslim countries and has carried out repeated attacks on Palestinian Muslims, which, he said, has led to widespread opposition among Muslims worldwide, including in Arab nations. He also pointed to rising tensions between the United States and Iran, suggesting that the broader geopolitical climate calls for diplomatic sensitivity.

Highlighting Priyanka Gandhi's past actions, Razvi said she has repeatedly expressed solidarity with Gaza, including raising the matter in Parliament and displaying symbols associated with Palestine to underline her support.

The remarks come amid continuing debate in India over foreign policy positions related to the Israel-Palestine conflict and the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

## QUICK READ

### PTI approaches SC for Imran's treatment at hospital of choice

**Islamabad**

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party on Wednesday filed a petition in the country's Supreme Court requesting the medical treatment of former Prime Minister Imran Khan at a hospital of his choice and permission for consulting his personal physicians, local media reported. PTI lawyer Sardar Latif Khosa filed the application in Supreme Court after PTI founder Imran Khan was taken to hospital for a follow-up treatment for his eye ailment. The application was filed on behalf of Khan and Islamabad district election commissioner has been named as the respondent, as it invoked the Toshakhana case.

### 'Special and exciting': Indian diaspora on PM Modi's Israel visit

**Jerusalem**

Members of the Indian diaspora in Israel on Wednesday expressed excitement over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, describing it as a 'very special day' for them and a moment of pride for Indians worldwide. Speaking to IANS, several members of the Indian community shared their enthusiasm about the Prime Minister's arrival and his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. One member of the diaspora said, I have been living in Israel for 12 years. In 2017, when PM Narendra Modi visited Israel, we met him in Parliament. Today, we are very excited once again.

### China's EV boom loses speed as weak demand and rising costs

**New Delhi**

The long-term profit outlook for many Chinese electric vehicle makers is coming under pressure as weak consumer demand and rising costs begin to bite, a report has said. Investors are increasingly questioning whether the rapid growth seen over the past few years can be sustained in a market that now looks crowded and more expensive to operate in. Sales figures toward the end of 2025 highlighted the problem. Overall EV sales failed to break out of a prolonged slowdown in China, the world's largest electric vehicle market.

# Google shuts down global Chinese-linked hacking network

Tech giant says cyber espionage targeted governments and telecom firms worldwide

**WASHINGTON**

Google has dismantled a sophisticated Chinese-linked hacking operation that infiltrated at least 53 organizations across 42 countries, according to an announcement made by the company on Wednesday. The tech major revealed that the cyber espionage campaign had been active for several years and primarily focused on government institutions and telecommunications providers.

The hacking group, tracked by Google under the codename UNC2814 and also known as Gallium, has reportedly maintained a nearly decade-long history of conducting cyber intrusions. According to findings shared by Google's Threat Intelligence Group, the operation represented a far-reaching surveillance network designed to gather sensitive data from high-value targets across multiple regions.

John Hultquist, chief analyst with Google Threat Intelligence Group, described the campaign as extensive and strategically coordinated. This was a vast surveillance apparatus used to spy on people and organizations throughout the world, he stated. The group allegedly leveraged advanced techniques to gain unauthorized access to networks, maintain persistence, and extract confidential information without immediate detection.

Google said the affected organizations were spread across Asia, Europe, North America, and parts of Africa, highlighting the global scope of the cyber campaign. Telecommunications companies were among the primary targets, raising concerns about potential access to communication records and metadata. Government entities were also impacted, suggesting that sensitive political and strategic information may have been at risk.

The company did not disclose specific details about how it disrupted the hacking infrastructure but confirmed that protective measures had been implemented to block malicious activity and secure compromised systems. Google also indicated it is working closely with impacted organizations and international cybersecurity partners to mitigate further risks.

Cybersecurity experts note that state-linked cyber espionage campaigns have grown increasingly sophisticated in recent years, often targeting critical infrastructure and public institutions. The disruption of this network marks a significant step in countering global cyber threats, but analysts warn that similar operations are likely ongoing.

Google emphasized the importance of continued vigilance, collaboration, and investment in cybersecurity defenses to combat evolving digital threats worldwide.

# Trump touts 'golden age' in State of the Union Address

**WASHINGTON**

**'My fellow Americans, our nation is back bigger, better, richer and stronger than ever before," he said**

U.S. President Donald Trump declared that he had ushered in a golden age of America during his State of the Union address, projecting confidence and accomplishment even as opinion polls show declining approval ratings and mounting public dissatisfaction.

Speaking before a sharply divided Congress, Trump sought to frame his administration as a historic success story at a politically sensitive moment ahead of November's midterm elections.

Responding to concerns from Republican lawmakers anxious about potentially losing their congressional majority, Trump devoted much of the first hour of his nationally televised speech to economic achievements. He asserted that his administration had successfully slowed inflation, propelled the stock market to record highs, enacted sweeping tax cuts, and reduced prescription drug prices. The president argued that these measures demonstrated a strong and resilient economy under his leadership.

Our nation is back — bigger, better, richer and stronger than ever before, Trump proclaimed to loud chants of USA, USA from Republican members of Congress. The atmosphere inside the chamber, however, reflected the country's political divide. Dozens of Democratic lawmakers were absent, many choosing instead to attend anti-Trump rallies held outside the venue.

Despite the president's optimistic tone, it remains uncertain whether his message will resonate with voters grappling with high living costs. While Trump blamed his Democratic predecessor, Joe Biden, for persistent price pressures, several recent opinion polls suggest that many Americans hold the current administration accountable for not doing enough to ease affordability concerns. The rising cost of housing, groceries, and healthcare continues to weigh heavily on households across the country.

Political analysts note that midterm elections often serve as a referendum on the sitting president's performance. With voter frustration simmering, Republicans face a challenging electoral landscape. Trump's address appeared carefully crafted to reassure both his party and the broader electorate that economic stability and growth remain central priorities.

# Kushner's Unorthodox diplomacy rattles Paris

**PARIS**

The appointment of Charles Kushner as U.S. ambassador to France has stirred controversy in Paris, where diplomatic tradition and protocol remain deeply ingrained.

Since arriving last summer as President Donald Trump's top emissary, Kushner has defied expectations, drawing criticism for his blunt style and disregard for established diplomatic customs.

Unlike many of his predecessors, Kushner has shown little interest in adopting the cultural norms of his host country. He has reportedly made no effort to learn French and has paid scant attention to the formalities of Parisian bureaucracy.

His approach has unsettled officials in a nation long considered the birthplace of modern diplomacy, where the role of ambassador traditionally carries both symbolic and strategic weight.

Kushner's selection for a post once held by figures such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson raised eyebrows from the outset.

A real estate magnate with no prior diplomatic experience, he previously served a federal prison sentence for illegal campaign contributions and tax evasion before being pardoned by Trump in 2020. His family ties have also drawn attention; his son Jared Kushner is married to Trump's daughter Ivanka.

*Proposal to reduce SRG license fee sparks debate over media independence and political bias.*

# Switzerland votes on broadcaster funding cut

**ZURICH**

Voters in Switzerland will head to the polls next month to decide whether to significantly reduce funding for the country's public broadcaster, SRG SSR. Supporters argue the move will ease financial pressure on households, while critics warn it reflects a broader trend of political attacks on public media institutions across Europe.

The proposal seeks to lower the mandatory annual broadcasting fee from 335 Swiss francs to 200 francs. Currently, residents are required to pay the levy to fund SRG's television, radio, and digital services. Backers of the measure, including members of the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP), say the reduction would provide modest but meaningful savings for families and better reflect changing media consumption habits.

Advocates of the cut argue that younger generations increasingly rely on social media platforms and streaming services rather than traditional television or radio broadcasts. They contend that forcing citizens to pay a high fee for services they rarely use is outdated in the digital era. Thomas Matter, an SVP lawmaker, claimed that SRG's journalistic work has a political bias, a bias to the left, echoing criticisms frequently directed at public broadcasters by conservative groups elsewhere in Europe.

Opponents, however, view the referendum as part of a wider pattern of pressure on publicly funded media from right-leaning political movements. They argue that national broadcasters serve as independent institutions capable of holding governments and powerful interests accountable. Reducing funding, they warn, could weaken journalistic capacity and undermine media pluralism in a country known for its strong democratic traditions. SRG has firmly rejected accusations of bias, stating that it adheres to strict editorial standards designed to ensure balanced reporting. The broadcaster has also pointed to research from the University of Zurich, which concluded that its news coverage does not systematically lean left or right. The outcome of the vote could have implications beyond Switzerland, as public broadcasters across Europe grapple with shrinking audiences, rising competition, and intensifying political scrutiny.

# Hungary Opposition Tisza widens lead over Fidesz

**BUDAPEST**

Hungary's centre-right opposition Tisza Party has significantly widened its lead over Prime Minister Viktor Orban's ruling Fidesz, according to a closely watched opinion poll released on Wednesday.

The findings come weeks before the April 12 parliamentary election, in which Orban is seeking to extend his 16-year tenure in power.

The survey, conducted by respected pollster Median and published by Hungarian news outlet hvg.hu, indicates a dramatic shift in voter sentiment. Among decided voters, Tisza has opened a 20-percentage-point lead over Fidesz, a sharp increase from the 12-point advantage recorded in January. The data suggests growing momentum for the opposition at a pivotal moment in Hungary's political landscape.

Tisza, led by former government insider Peter Magyar, has gained traction despite being launched only in 2024. The party now commands the support of 55% of decided voters, up from 51% a month earlier. In contrast, support for Fidesz has declined to 35%, down from 39% in January, reflecting mounting challenges for Orban's administration.

Orban, a nationalist leader known for his conservative policies and clashes with the European Union, is facing his strongest electoral challenge in more than a decade. The upcoming vote is widely viewed as a defining moment not only for Hungary but also for the broader trajectory of far-right political movements across Europe. Analysts say the result could reshape Hungary's domestic policies and its relationship with EU institutions.

The poll results come despite a series of government measures aimed at winning over voters, including economic initiatives and social spending promises following three years of economic stagnation. Rising living costs and sluggish growth have fueled dissatisfaction among segments of the electorate, providing an opening for the opposition.

As campaigning intensifies ahead of the April 12 election, both parties are expected to sharpen their messaging.

# Ukrainian negotiators are set to meet with US team

**KYIV**

Ukrainian negotiators are set to meet U.S. officials on Thursday to advance discussions on post-war reconstruction, including a proposed prosperity package aimed at rebuilding the war-torn country, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Wednesday.

The meeting marks a significant step in broader diplomatic efforts to stabilize Ukraine as the conflict enters its fifth year.

According to Zelenskiy, the talks will begin as a bilateral meeting between Ukrainian and American representatives before potentially expanding into a trilateral framework that would include Russia. Kyiv hopes such a three-way meeting could take place in early March, signaling cautious momentum in diplomatic engagement aimed at ending the war.

The Ukrainian delegation will be led by Rustem Umerov, secretary of the National Security and Defence Council and head of the country's negotiating team. He is scheduled to meet in Geneva with US special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of Trump.

First, it will be a bilateral meeting. The first question is the prosperity package, which is the package for Ukraine's recovery, and they will discuss the details, he said.

The proposed recovery framework is expected to outline financial assistance, infrastructure rebuilding plans, and economic revitalization initiatives designed to restore growth and stability after years of destruction, he added.

## SU DO KU

**Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?**

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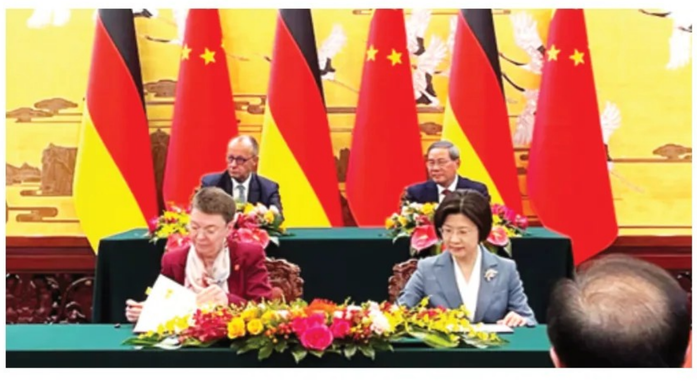
Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

**Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.**

**GREATER COLLAB FOR GROWTH**

# *Germany's Merz seeks closer ties with China*

**BEIJING**



China and Germany signaled their intent to deepen bilateral cooperation as German Chancellor Friedrich Merz met Chinese Premier Li Qiang in Beijing on Wednesday.

The visit marks a significant diplomatic effort by Berlin to recalibrate relations with its largest trading partner amid a widening trade imbalance that has increasingly disadvantaged German industries.

Opening his visit in the Chinese capital, Merz stressed that Germany places great importance on maintaining and expanding its extensive economic exchanges with China. However, he underscored that future cooperation must be based on fairness, transparency, and open dialogue. We have very specific concerns regarding our cooperation, which we want to improve and make fair, Merz said, highlighting the delicate balancing act he faces in redefining economic ties that have grown more complex in recent years.

China has been Germany's largest trading partner, but the relationship has come under scrutiny in Berlin due to mounting trade deficits and concerns about market access for German firms. German policymakers are increasingly wary of dependency risks, particularly in strategic sectors such as automotive manufacturing, advanced technology, and renewable energy supply chains.

For his part, Li called for stronger collaboration to safeguard multilateralism and defend free trade. His remarks were widely interpreted as an indirect reference to U.S. President Donald Trump and the trade war policies that have disrupted global supply chains and unsettled international markets. Li emphasized that China and Germany, as two of the world's largest economies, carry a shared responsibility to promote stability in global governance.

# ECB, The Hundred Franchises Oppose Nationality-Based Player Exclusion

## Joint statement stresses merit-based selection amid Pakistani player concerns

**LONDON**

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and all eight franchises of The Hundred have jointly asserted that players must not be excluded on the grounds of nationality, amid concerns that Pakistani cricketers could be overlooked at next month's auction.

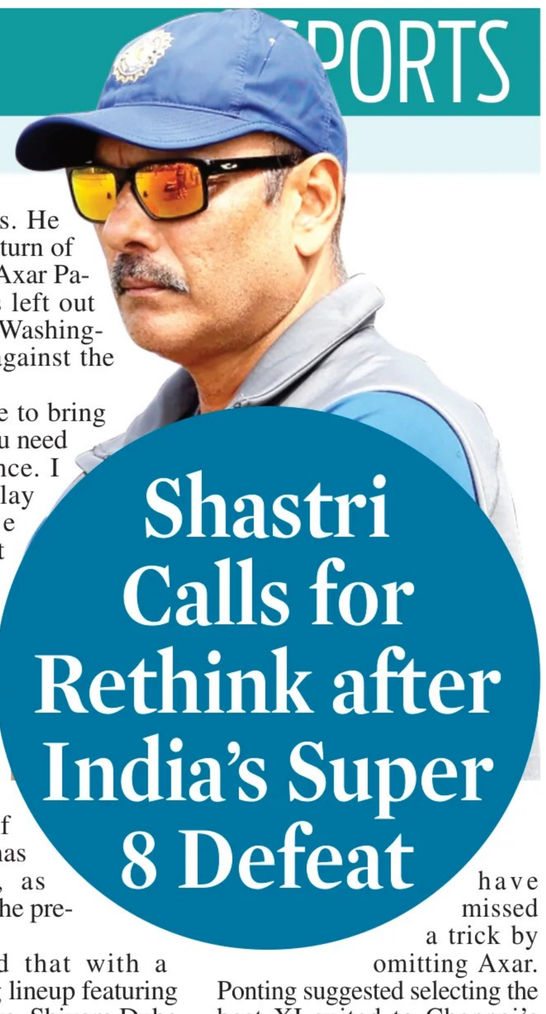
The statement comes in the wake of British media reports suggesting that four Indian-owned teams — Manchester Super Giants (RPSG Group), MI London (Reliance), Southern Brave (GMR) and Sunrisers Leeds (Sun Group) — may avoid signing Pakistani players due to geopolitical sensitivities.

"The Hundred was established to reach new audiences, grow the game of cricket and ensure that everyone — regardless of their ethnicity, gender, faith, nationality or otherwise — feels they belong in our sport. Players must not be excluded on the grounds of their nationality," the joint statement said. The ECB reiterated that, as the governing body responsible for running the tournament, it is committed to ensuring there is no place for discrimination and has regulations in place to take robust action against any such conduct. All eight teams, including those with links to the Indian Premier League (IPL), committed to selecting players based solely on cricketing performance, availability and team requirements.

Although Indian ownership has drawn attention, participation of Pakistani players in The Hundred has historically been limited. Only two featured last season, and just nine have played across the first five editions.

A total of 67 Pakistani cricketers, including nearly the entire men's T20 World Cup squad, have registered for the upcoming auction. Pakistan opener Sahibzada Farhan recently expressed his desire to compete in the tournament. Pakistani players have not featured in the IPL since the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, and similar patterns have been observed in leagues such as SA20 and ILT20, where franchises with IPL-linked ownership have refrained from signing them.

England captain Harry Brook earlier termed it a "shame" if Pakistan players were excluded, while spinner Moeen Ali warned that any deliberate exclusion could invite legal scrutiny.



# Shastri Calls for Rethink after India's Super 8 Defeat

**CHENNAI**

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri believes the team's heavy defeat to South Africa national cricket team in the Super 8 stage could prove to be a blessing in disguise, urging the defending champions to reassess their team composition ahead of the business end of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

India slumped to a 76-run loss in Ahmedabad on Sunday, their first defeat after 12 consecutive victories across the last two editions of the tournament. The setback has put added pressure on the side ahead of their must-win clash against Zimbabwe in Chennai.

"You win 12 matches on the trot, there's bound to be an off day. And I'm glad it has come early. It might just be the shakeup India needed," Shastri said on The ICC Review. He added that the loss should prompt the team management to rethink strategy and combinations.

Shastri emphasised the importance of fielding an extra spinner in spin-friendly Indian conditions. He backed the return of vice-captain Axar Patel, who was left out in favour of Washington Sundar against the Proteas.

"They have to bring him back. You need that experience. I would say play both. Give yourself that extra option," Shastri said, pointing out that relying on limited bowling options could prove costly if one bowler has an off day, as happened in the previous match.

He argued that with a strong batting lineup featuring Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube and Sundar, India can afford to bolster their bowling without weakening the batting depth. Australia great Ricky Ponting echoed similar sentiments, stating that India may have missed a trick by omitting Axar. Ponting suggested selecting the best XI suited to Chennai's conditions, even hinting at a recall for Kuldeep Yadav.

With another defeat potentially jeopardising semifinal hopes, India face a crucial test of character and tactical clarity.

*Big victory crucial to revive campaign and net run rate*

# India Seek Top-Order Revival in Must-Win Clash against Zimbabwe

**CHENNAI**

Under pressure after a crushing defeat, India will look to address glaring top-order concerns when they face Zimbabwe in a must-win Super 8 contest of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium on Thursday.

A comprehensive 76-run loss to South Africa national cricket team has left the defending champions with a battered net run rate of -3.80, making a big-margin victory imperative to keep semifinal hopes alive.

India's top-order frailties have emerged as the central concern. Abhishek Sharma, who was instrumental in India's pre-tournament success, has struggled for rhythm following a stomach infection. Dull pitches and disciplined off-spin have curtailed his attacking game, leaving him with just 15 runs from four matches.

At the other end, Ishan Kishan has stood tall with a blistering strike-rate of 193, but the lack of sustained support has put undue pressure on him. Tilak Varma, operating at No.3, has managed a modest strike-rate of 118 — well below modern T20 demands. Captain Suryakumar Yadav, despite scoring 180 runs, has also batted below his usual tempo.

The team management could consider tactical tweaks, including promoting Suryakumar to No.3 or introducing Sanju Samson to break the sequence of left-handers at the top. However, Samson's recent form raises its own questions.

Chepauk's surface may offer some relief. The track previously produced a high-scoring encounter, and Zimbabwe's spin trio — Graeme Cremer, Sikandar Raza and Ryan Burl — lacks the potency of attacks India have faced so far. However, their pace battery led by Blessing Muzarabani and Richard Ngarava can exploit any early vulnerability.

On the bowling front, India remain well-equipped. Jasprit Bumrah continues to lead the attack with authority, supported by Arshdeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy and Hardik Pandya. The expected return of Axar Patel could further strengthen the spin options.

With little room for error, India must rediscover their batting fluency to stay afloat in the tournament.

# West Indies' Firepower Meets Proteas Pace in Super 8 Showdown

**AHMEDABAD**

Unbeaten sides battle for semifinal edge in Ahmedabad today

The explosive batting might of the West Indies cricket team will be put to a stern examination against the disciplined pace arsenal of the South Africa national cricket team in a high-stakes Super 8 clash of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup here on Thursday.

Both teams enter the contest unbeaten and brimming with confidence. South Africa are riding high after a commanding 76-run victory over India in Ahmedabad, while the West Indies showcased their batting depth with a 107-run demolition of Zimbabwe in Mumbai.

The Caribbean side's lineup is stacked with power-hitters capable of altering the course of a match in a few overs. However, they now face a well-rounded South African attack spearheaded by Marco Jansen, Kagiso Rabada and Lungi Ngidi, with left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj providing control in the middle overs.

Their collective effort dismantled India's formidable batting order earlier this week.

South Africa's batting unit has been equally dependable. David Miller once again underlined his reputation as a crisis specialist with a match-defining knock after early setbacks against India.

Key individual battles could shape the outcome. Shimron Hetmyer's aggressive strokeplay against Rabada's pace and bounce promises fireworks, while Rovman Powell's ability to counter spin will be tested by Maharaj's guile. Jansen's steep bounce against Brandon King at the top also presents a fascinating duel.

Unlike previous night fixtures, this afternoon encounter at the Narendra Modi Stadium may eliminate the dew factor, ensuring more balanced conditions. A slightly drier surface could aid spinners, while the heat may challenge players' endurance.

South Africa's familiarity with the Ahmedabad conditions could provide a subtle advantage in a pressure situation.

# Six Indian Wrestlers Suspended for Forging Birth Certificates

**CHENNAI**

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) suspended six wrestlers for two years for submitting forged birth certificates to compete in the 2026 Federation Cup and other national tournaments, highlighting ongoing concerns over integrity in Indian wrestling.

The suspended wrestlers — Deepak Kumar (65kg), Akash (74kg), Hari (125kg), Mohit Deshwal (79kg), Yatin, and Dixit Chauhan — were representing Chandigarh. The WFI order stated that the certificates submitted by the athletes were forwarded to the Office of the Director, Health & Family Welfare, Chandigarh, for verification. The office confirmed the documents were forged.

"The submission of forged documents for participation in a national-level competition is a serious act of misconduct and amounts to forgery and misrepresentation. Such unethical and illegal actions undermine the integrity of the sport and bring disrepute to the wrestling community," the WFI stated. All results and participation of these wrestlers in the events have been declared null and void.

The federation also directed the Chandigarh state unit to implement strict verification procedures in the future to prevent recurrence of similar incidents.

In a separate action, two U15 wrestlers were suspended for two years for submitting misleading information to the Haryana Wrestling Association to secure participation in the U15 State Wrestling Championship held on February 21-22 at Ladhot village. These wrestlers scanned and affixed orders issued in another individual's name to their own records, constituting document forgery.

The WFI emphasized that falsifying records, whether for senior or junior competitions, constitutes a severe breach of ethics and governance. The federation reaffirmed its commitment to uphold transparency, fairness, and accountability in all levels of Indian wrestling.

With these actions, the WFI hopes to send a strong message against unethical practices and maintain the credibility of the sport across the country.

# National Sports Federations under Scrutiny for Governance Failures

**CHENNAI**

Several Indian National Sports Federations (NSFs) are facing scrutiny over governance lapses, prompting the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to step in and request the Indian Olympic Association to form ad-hoc committees for handball and karate ahead of the Commonwealth and Asian Games.

Despite the National Sports Governance (NSG) Act being in force, multiple federations have either been de-recognized or withheld funding, leaving athletes in limbo. Legal disputes, unclear selection criteria, and the absence of national tournaments are affecting preparations for mega events.

In recent weeks, the ministry has requested ad-hoc panels in handball and karate, following a Delhi High Court order directing similar interventions in two other NSFs. While not priority sports, both handball and karate will send teams to the Asian Games, making proper administration critical.

Karate faces a unique challenge with multiple bodies claiming legitimacy — All India Karate-Do Federation (AIKDF), Karate Association of India (KAI), Karate India Organisation (KIO), and others — creating confusion over athlete selection and event participation. Past mismanagement even led to Indian entries being rejected at the previous Asian Games.

Other federations are also under court-mandated oversight. The Delhi High Court instructed the Judo Federation of India to hand over administration to a newly constituted interim executive committee, while the Equestrian Federation continues to experience turmoil. Softball also faces governance issues.

The ministry has relied on provisions of the 2011 National Sports Development Code to bypass delays and ensure teams can participate. "In the exercise of powers under the Sports Code, the Ministry requests IOA to constitute a transitory committee or Ad-Hoc Committee to oversee selection and entries for Handball athletes in international events," a ministry statement said.

With major international competitions approaching, these interventions aim to safeguard athletes' interests, bring clarity to administration, and prevent a repeat of past organizational lapses.

# Brook Played Best Innings of His Life: Shaheen Afridi

**KANDY**

Shaheen Shah Afridi lavished praise on Harry Brook after the England captain's scintillating century powered his team into the semifinals of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and left Pakistan's campaign hanging by a thread.

Brook smashed his maiden T20I hundred off just 50 balls, striking four sixes and 10 fours, as England chased down a competitive 165-run target with five balls to spare in a thrilling two-wicket win. The knock, described by Afridi as "world-class", came under pressure on a tricky surface in Pallekele.

"In my opinion this will be the best innings of his life," Afridi said after the match. "It wasn't an easy pitch to bat on but he took the game away from us."

The Pakistan spearhead had earlier rocked England's top order with a fiery spell, dismissing Phil Salt off the first ball and then removing Jos Buttler and Jacob Bethell to reduce England to 35 for three in the powerplay. Promoted to No.3 after discussions with coach Brendon McCullum, Brook absorbed the pressure before counterattacking with authority.

He stitched together crucial partnerships — 45 runs with Sam Curran and 52 with Will Jacks — to steady the chase. His hundred was the second fastest in T20 World Cup history and the first by a captain in the tournament, with only Chris Gayle having reached the milestone quicker in 2016.

Afridi eventually bowled Brook with a pinpoint yorker immediately after the milestone, but instead of celebrating exuberantly, he walked up to shake Brook's hand in a touching display of sportsmanship.

"Brook played proper cricketing shots and he deserved a handshake," Afridi said.

# Record Teenager Yuvraj Samra Continues Meteoric Rise

**CHENNAI**

Days after scoring a historic T20 World Cup century for Canada against New Zealand, 19-year-old Yuvraj Samra is sharpening his skills under the mentorship of Jwala Singh, renowned for nurturing India's Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Singh has been impressed by Samra's adaptability across diverse pitches in Mumbai. "I took him to the Air India ground, Thane, Oval Maidan and BKC grounds. That shows he's mentally strong and knows how to adjust and deliver," Singh said. "Many players have skills, but few perform on big occasions — he's one of them."

Samra became the youngest to score a T20 World Cup century, dispatching world-class Kiwi bowlers like Kyle Jamieson, Jimmy Neesham, and Matt Henry with poise at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. Despite Canada losing the match by eight wickets on February 17, his innings captured global attention.

The young southpaw's hunger for improvement has been evident. "His last game was on the 19th, and the next day he was in Mumbai training. Most would take a break, but he's eager to play on every surface," Singh noted. The coach also highlighted Samra's rare long-hitting ability and maturity at just 19.

Singh compared Samra's clarity and focus to other top talents he has coached, emphasizing that, unlike many Indian players with structured training, Samra comes from a nation with limited cricketing infrastructure. "Coming from Canada, with minimal coaching and domestic exposure, his talent is extraordinary," Singh added.

Samra himself hopes his innings can inspire other Canadian players. "Making a living in cricket from Canada is hard. Many of my teammates work two jobs while playing. If I can do it, others can too," he said, underlining his ambition to open doors for fellow cricketers.

## QUICK READ

### EU restricts Chinese arachidonic acid oil amid baby formula recalls

**New Delhi**

The European Commission announced stricter controls on imports of arachidonic acid oil from China beginning February 26, after finding that it is the source of contamination in infant formulas. Since December, major producers including Nestlé, Lactalis and Danone have recalled infant formula in 60 countries after tests detected cereulide, a toxin produced by bacterium Bacillus cereus, that can cause gastrointestinal illness, particularly in infants who are more prone to dehydration. French authorities are investigating the deaths of two infants suspected to be linked to contaminated milk. The EU's food safety watchdog European Food Safety Authority set a recommended maximum safe daily intake for cereulide for infants earlier this month.

### Hiring in semiconductor design GCCs rebound in India in Q4 2025

**Hyderabad**

Job openings in the Indian semiconductor design global capability centres (GCCs) increased in the October-December period last year (Q4 2025), with November and December recording the strongest month-on-month uptick in job openings during the year, though hiring volumes remained below early-2025 levels, a report showed on Wednesday. According to Careernet's 'India's Semiconductor Design GCC Talent Ecosystem-CY 2025' report, an analysis of hiring data across the top 50 semiconductor design GCCs shows that open positions declined steadily from January to October in 2025. However, Q4 2025 signalled renewed confidence, it noted.

### Sensex, Nifty end slightly higher; IT, metal stocks shine

**Mumbai**

Indian stock markets ended slightly higher on Wednesday, even though they gave up most of their early gains during the day. Heavyweights like Reliance Industries and State Bank of India put pressure on the indices, while buying in metal and IT stocks helped limit the losses. The Nifty closed 57.85 points, or 0.23 per cent, higher at 25,482.50. The Sensex ended up 50.15 points, or 0.06 per cent, at 82,276.07. Analysts said that the 25,400 level is acting as immediate structural support, while the 25,600–25,650 zone, aligned with the 50- and 100-day EMAs, remains a strong resistance cluster capping upside attempts.

# Gujarat all set for 3rd Semiconnect Conference

The event is expected to boost India's semiconductor growth and showcase the state's strong global market potential.

**GANDHINAGAR**

Gujarat is set to host the third edition of the Semiconnect Conference on March 1 in Gandhinagar, bringing together leading semiconductor chief executives, policymakers and industry experts from across the world. The two-day event aims to deliberate on India's expanding role in the global semiconductor value chain and explore new opportunities for collaboration, investment and innovation in the sector.

The conference is being organised by the state's Department of Science and Technology along with the Gujarat State Electronics Mission (GSEM). The initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of achieving self-reliance in critical technologies, with semiconductors identified as a strategic priority in India's growth agenda. The event is expected to reinforce India's commitment to strengthening domestic capabilities in chip manufacturing and advanced electronics.

The conference will be inaugurated in the presence of Bhupendra Patel, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Railways and Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw, Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, and Science and Technology Minister Arjun Modhwadia. Their participation underscores the importance being accorded to the semiconductor sector at both state and national levels.

The theme of this year's conference, 'Gujarat: India's Gateway to Silicon', highlights the state's ambition to emerge as a key hub in India's semiconductor ecosystem. With robust infrastructure, well-developed industrial corridors and investor-friendly policies, Gujarat is positioning itself as an attractive destination for semiconductor manufacturing and research activities.

Officials stated that the conference will feature keynote addresses, thematic panel discussions and international roundtables. The first day's sessions will focus on next-generation semiconductor research and manufacturing, logistics and export readiness for emerging hubs such as Dholera and Sanand, and workforce development strategies to meet future skill requirements.

Deliberations will also cover strengthening India's electronics manufacturing base, including printed circuit boards and the creation of a resilient component ecosystem. Through this conference, Gujarat aims to accelerate partnerships and investments that can contribute to making India a significant player in the global semiconductor industry.

# China EV makers face shutdown threat

**BEIJING**

Weak demand and rising costs challenge China's electric vehicle industry.

The long-term profit outlook for Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers is coming under mounting pressure as slowing consumer demand and rising operational costs weigh heavily on the sector.

After several years of rapid expansion, investors are increasingly questioning whether the growth momentum can be sustained in what is now a crowded and more competitive market.

Sales data toward the end of 2025 underscored the slowdown in the world's largest EV market. Overall electric vehicle sales in China failed to rebound from a prolonged slump, signaling cooling demand even as automakers continue to launch new models at an aggressive pace. Among the worst affected was Li Auto, which reported a sharp decline in deliveries. In November 2025, the company delivered just over 33,000 vehicles, marking a nearly 32 per cent drop compared to the same month a year earlier. The decline raised concerns about weakening demand, even for established domestic brands.

A recent report by The New York Times highlighted deeper structural challenges facing China's EV industry. Intense price competition has squeezed profit margins across the sector, while government subsidies that once fueled explosive growth are gradually being scaled back. Without the cushion of generous state support, companies are now confronting the true costs of operating in a saturated marketplace. Faster production cycles have added to the pressure. New models are introduced so frequently that no single automaker can maintain a technological or design advantage for long. This dynamic has made it harder for firms to differentiate themselves and command premium pricing.

China's largest EV maker, BYD, reflects many of these challenges. The company's extraordinary growth was partly driven by years of strong government backing. However, experts suggest that the market is nearing saturation in major urban centers where charging infrastructure is well developed. According to John Paul MacDuffie of the Wharton School, many Chinese carmakers may have already reached most consumers for whom owning an EV is practical.

In smaller towns and rural regions, limited charging infrastructure continues to restrict adoption. As a result, companies must now focus on building brand loyalty and encouraging repeat purchases—an area where traditional automakers have decades of experience.

**KEY FACTORS DRIVING PROFIT PRESSURES**

- **Weakened demand & overcapacity:** The market has hit a slowdown, particularly with weakened consumer demand in smaller, rural areas, resulting in a potential industry sales drop.
- **Declining subsidies & tax hikes:** From January 1, 2026, the full purchase tax exemption for New Energy Vehicles (NEVs) was halved, reducing incentives, while government, a 20,000 yuan trade-in subsidy, saw uncertainty.
- **Intense price wars & regulation:** Despite fierce competition prompting a price war, the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) banned manufacturers from selling vehicles below cost in February 2026 to stabilize the market.
- **Manufacturer distress:** Only a few, such as BYD, remain strongly profitable, while roughly 50 unprofitable firms are forced to restructure or shut down.

## Steel veteran Jatinder Mehra passes away, industry mourns

**NEW DELHI**

Steel industry veteran Jatinder Mehra on Wednesday passed away marking the end of an era for India's metals and mining sector.

With a career spanning more than six decades, Mehra was widely respected for his technical knowledge, sharp strategic thinking and the ability to turn ambitious ideas into successful large-scale projects.

Mehra served as Vice Chairman of the Metals and Mining Division at Essar Group, where he played a crucial role in guiding the group's steel and metals businesses. In a condolence message, the Essar family expressed deep sorrow over his passing, remembering him as a visionary leader whose clarity, commitment and leadership helped define some of the group's most important milestones.

The Essar family is deeply saddened by the passing of Jatinder Mehra, a respected veteran of India's steel industry and a leader whose vision charted some of our most significant milestones at Essar Group, the firm stated. They noted that his contributions remain deeply embedded in Essar's journey and that his legacy will continue to guide the organisation in the years ahead.

At Essar, he was instrumental in shaping long-term strategy and expanding steelmaking capacity, including major developments at Hazira. He also led the development of large integrated projects such as the Paradip steel facility in Odisha, strengthening Essar's presence in the global steel market.

*Businesses hesitate amid uncertainty, high costs and weak demand conditions.*

# Private investment falls despite interest rate cuts

**ISLAMABAD**

Private investment in Pakistan has witnessed a sharp decline despite a significant reduction in interest rates, reflecting deeper structural challenges within the economy.

According to an article published in The News International, businesses are holding back from borrowing and expansion due to an uncertain economic environment marked by high energy costs, regulatory unpredictability and heavy taxation.

Data released by the State Bank of Pakistan revealed that private sector bank borrowing fell by 39 per cent during the first seven months of FY2026. Borrowing dropped to Rs 666 billion compared to Rs 1,087 billion during the same period last year. This decline comes despite a steep reduction in the policy rate from 22 per cent to 10.5 per cent within a year, raising concerns about the effectiveness of monetary easing in stimulating investment.

The article noted that if interest rates were the decisive factor driving investment, borrowing levels should have increased rather than declined. Instead, the contraction highlights underlying weaknesses in the business climate. Companies are reportedly reluctant to take on new debt because the environment in which capital must be deployed remains costly and unpredictable.

Industry in Pakistan continues to grapple with prohibitively high electricity tariffs, inconsistent gas supplies, rising logistics expenses and delays in raw material imports. In addition, frequent regulatory changes and an overburdened tax structure further complicate business operations. Analysts argue that even single-digit interest rates cannot compensate for uncompetitive energy pricing and policy instability that erode profitability.

Monetary easing has also had limited impact due to subdued demand. With purchasing power under pressure and exports constrained by competitiveness challenges, businesses see little incentive to expand capacity. Producing more goods makes little sense when domestic and international markets are unable to absorb additional output profitably.

Furthermore, investment decisions are shaped by expectations about future economic conditions. Concerns over sudden taxation measures, exchange-rate volatility and possible policy reversals have prompted many firms to deleverage, conserve cash or postpone expansion plans. The decline in private borrowing thus signals broader economic uncertainty rather than merely a response to interest rate levels.

# South Korea eases visa rules to attract 30M tourists

**SEOUL**

South Korea on Wednesday announced a comprehensive set of measures to promote inbound tourism, including relaxed visa rules and expanded entry access through regional airports.

The initiatives were unveiled during an expanded national tourism strategy meeting held at Cheong Wa Dae and chaired by President Lee Jae Myung, with senior officials from relevant ministries in attendance.

Under the new measures, the government will make visa and entry procedures more flexible for foreign tourists. Indonesia will be added to a pilot visa waiver programme for group travellers of three or more people, aiming to boost arrivals from Southeast Asia.

Authorities also plan to introduce five-year multiple-entry visas for visitors from China and Southeast Asian countries who have previously travelled to South Korea. In addition, 10-year multiple-entry visas will be offered to travellers from major cities in China and Vietnam, further encouraging repeat visits.

**KEY POINTS**

- New visa waivers for Indonesian groups
- Multi-year visas for China & Southeast Asia
- Expanded automated immigration for EU
- More international flights to regional airports
- Targeting 30 million visitors by 2030

The automated immigration clearance system, currently available to citizens of 18 countries including Japan, Singapore and Australia, will be expanded to cover European Union member states. Officials believe this will streamline entry procedures and enhance convenience for long-haul travellers.

To reduce congestion in Seoul and surrounding areas, the government will expand international direct flights to regional airports. Exclusive international air traffic rights will be designated for local airports to help distribute inbound travel demand more evenly across the country. Incentives such as reductions in airport facility usage fees and financial subsidies will be offered to attract new international routes.

Tourism promotion strategies will also shift focus toward regional destinations. The government plans to develop tailored travel packages and launch region-specific marketing campaigns to showcase diverse cultural, historical and natural attractions beyond the capital.

With international cruise ship arrivals projected to reach around 1.7 million this year, authorities will expand immigration and security screening facilities at domestic ports. Expedited clearance systems for cruise passengers will also be introduced to ensure smoother processing and enhance the overall visitor experience.

## Scindia slams luxury treatment for BSNL director

**NEW DELHI**

Calling the reported luxury treatment for a BSNL Director improper and a violation of established rules, Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday termed the conduct unacceptable and shocking, confirming that a show cause notice has been issued. The controversy arose after details surfaced about elaborate arrangements for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited Director Vivek Bansal's proposed visit to Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.

Responding to media queries, Scindia said the episode violated established norms and traditions. A seven-day show cause notice has been served, and appropriate action will follow, he added. Stressing that "royal treatment" for officials is unimaginable today, he warned that those found guilty will not be spared.

An official order revealed nearly 50 staff were deployed for two days to handle 21 tasks, including boat rides, temple visits, holy dips at the Triveni Sangam, bathing kits, transport, photography, and refreshments—sparking criticism over misuse of public resources.

**WHEELS OF CHANGE**

# *India aims to lead global electric mobility: HDK*

**SEOUL**

India can firmly establish itself as a leading global centre for electric mobility manufacturing and innovation with clear policy direction and robust industry participation, Union Minister of Heavy Industries and Steel H D Kumaraswamy said on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the third FICCI National Conference on Electric Vehicles, the minister emphasised that the government is committed to accelerating electric mobility adoption. Whatever best way we can encourage electric mobility adoption, we are going to go for that, he stated, underlining the Centre's proactive stance in promoting the sector.

Referring to the broader national vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047', Kumaraswamy said electric mobility must remain central to the Make in India initiative. He stressed that strengthening domestic manufacturing, deepening localisation, and positioning India as a global production hub for electric vehicles, advanced batteries and critical components are key priorities.

The minister highlighted the steady progress made by India's automotive sector over the past decade. Automotive component exports have nearly doubled, increasing from around $8 billion to $16.9 billion. According to him, this growth reflects India's deepening integration into global value chains and its rising credibility as a competitive manufacturing destination.

The conference also featured remarks by Amitabh Kant, who pointed out that the global electric vehicle market is expected to reach trillions of dollars over the next decade. He noted that global supply chains are undergoing significant realignments, with countries reassessing trade localisation and strategic dependencies.

Kant emphasised that India must seize this opportunity to position itself as a trusted manufacturing hub for electric vehicles. He said the country's strong policy framework, expanding domestic market and growing technological capabilities provide a solid foundation for long-term leadership in the EV ecosystem.

Industry leaders at the event echoed the sentiment that coordinated action between government and private players will be crucial in building a resilient and globally competitive electric mobility sector.

## FIFA chief "very reassured" as Mexico prepares for World Cup

**BARRANQUILLA**

FIFA President Gianni Infantino expressed confidence about Mexico's readiness to host the upcoming FIFA World Cup, despite a surge in violence following the killing of a notorious drug cartel leader.

Speaking in the Colombian city of Barranquilla, Infantino said, "Very reassured, everything's good. It's going to be spectacular," just two days after members of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) wreaked havoc in Guadalajara and other regions. The unrest followed the army's operation that killed cartel head Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera.The clashes, concentrated mainly in Guadalajara, left at least 74 people dead, including cartel members, with only one civilian casualty reported by authorities. Cartel gunmen blocked roads in 20 of Mexico's 32 states, torched vehicles and businesses, and forced residents and tourists to take cover.

Despite the chaos, Infantino insisted that there was "no risk" to football fans attending the tournament, which Mexico will co-host with the United States and Canada from June 11 to July 19. Guadalajara is set to host four group-stage matches, including a key Uruguay vs Spain game, and will co-host the playoff tournament with Monterrey. Mexico City and Monterrey were largely unaffected by the unrest. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum also reassured fans that security was under control and the situation was stabilizing, while Jalisco Governor Pablo Lemus ruled out the possibility of Guadalajara being dropped as a venue. Mexico national team coach Javier Aguirre echoed the optimism, saying, "All is going ahead as planned.

# India Beat Australia in Shootout, SIT EIGHTH IN PRO LEAGUE

### Resilient India claim bonus point after tense draw against hosts Australia

**TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA**

The Indian men's hockey team secured a 3-1 shootout victory over hosts Australia in their eighth match of the 2025-26 FIH Pro League season at the Tasmania Hockey Centre on Wednesday. The match had ended 1-1 in regulation time.

India, coming off successive shootout defeats against Australia and Spain, showed composure under pressure. Captain Jeremy Hayward (49') converted a penalty corner to give Australia the lead in the final quarter. However, Shilanand Lakra (51') equalised soon after, finishing from close range following a well-worked team move initiated by Hardik Singh and Abhishek.

The opening quarters saw Australia dominate possession, but India's defence stood firm, with goalkeeper Mohith Honnenahalli Shashikumar making crucial saves. Both teams earned multiple penalty corners but failed to capitalise fully during regulation time.

In the shootout, Lakra, Maninder Singh and Vishnukant Singh converted their attempts, while Mohith denied Australia three times to seal the bonus point for India.

With the first half of the season complete, India are currently eighth on the points table with four points, only ahead of Pakistan. The team, still chasing its first outright win of the campaign, will resume its remaining eight matches in June in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, including two key fixtures against Pakistan in London.

# KSRA Secretary, Joint Secretary to Step Down After Members Reject Amendments

**BENGALURU**

**Life members overwhelmingly oppose controversial changes at Karnataka rifle body**

The Karnataka State Rifle Association (KSRA) faced a dramatic turn as secretary G Susheel and joint secretary Praveen S offered to resign following the rejection of proposed amendments to its Memorandum and bye-laws during an Extraordinary General Body Meeting (EGM).

The EGM, convened to align KSRA with the new National Sports Code effective January 2026, drew around 200 members and lasted over three hours, marked by tense and chaotic proceedings. Most of the proposed changes were voted down by life members, who hold more than 1,500 voting rights, leading to a decisive pushback against the office-bearers.

In a message to media, Susheel confirmed: "We announced we will be resigning in due course." The resignations were prompted by concerns over compliance with the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) bye-law 3(j), which disqualifies individuals whose spouses or themselves are dealers of arms and ammunition from holding membership or office. Susheel owns an armoury, while Praveen's wife is an arms dealer and manufacturer, prompting members to call for their exit.

Life member and shooter Rajesh Manpat said, "After voting against the proposed changes, we also voted in majority for the two (Susheel and Praveen) to step down after their disclosures about the arms business." Members asked them to complete the EGM proceedings and formalize resignations in the next managing committee meeting.

Among the rejected amendments were proposals to hand voting power to district associations at the expense of life members, increase the maximum age of office bearers from 70 to 75, and create a third vice-president position. Conversely, the minimum age for eligibility on the athletes' commission was reduced from 35 to 25.

The outcome marks a significant victory for life members, emphasizing their influence in safeguarding transparency, adherence to NRAI regulations, and preventing potential consolidation of power within the KSRA managing committee.

*Norwegian side stun Italians as English and Spanish clubs progress comfortably*

# Bodo/Glimt Shock Inter, Newcastle and Atletico Join Champions League Last 16

**PARIS**

Bodo/Glimt produced one of the most remarkable upsets in modern UEFA Champions League history, eliminating last season's runners-up Inter Milan 5-2 on aggregate after a 2-1 victory at San Siro, while Newcastle United, Atletico Madrid and Bayer Leverkusen also advanced to the last 16.

Bodo/Glimt, the modest outfit from north of the Arctic Circle, had stunned Inter with a 3-1 win in the first leg and survived early pressure in Milan before Jens Petter Hauge opened the scoring just before the hour mark. Hakon Evjen made it 2-0 on the night, effectively sealing the tie on aggregate, despite Alessandro Bastoni pulling one back for Inter.

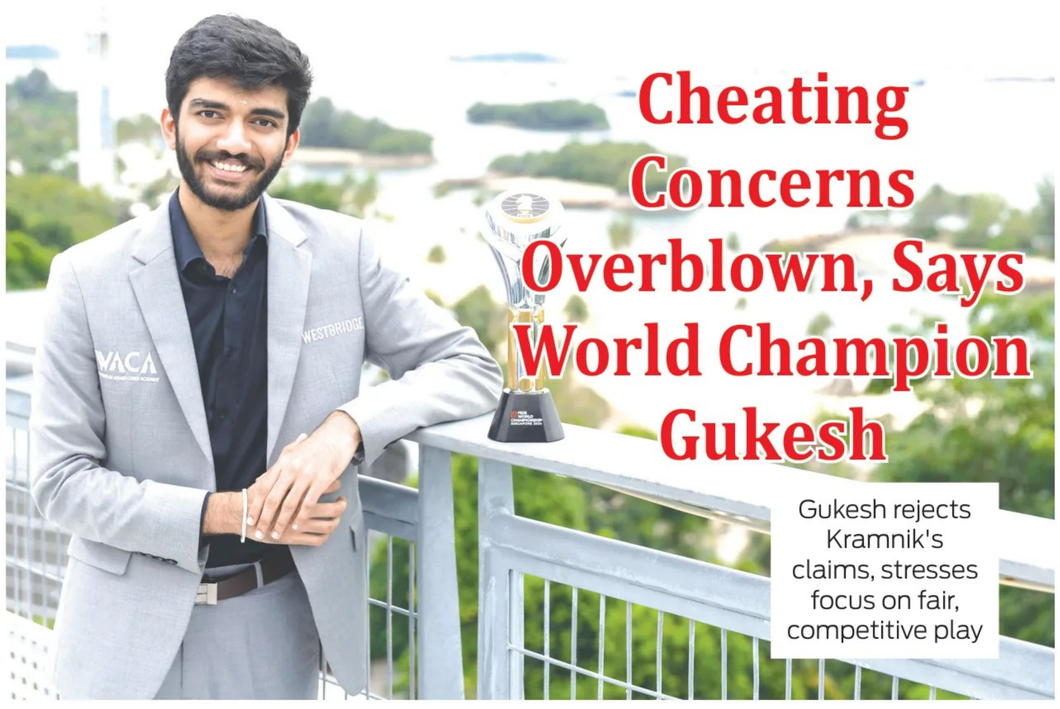
The Norwegian side, winners of four Eliteserien titles in five years and runners-up last season, became the first team from Norway to reach the Champions League last 16 since Rosenborg in 1997. "It's been unbelievable. Inter are a very strong team and played in last season's final," Hauge said. They will learn their next opponents on Friday, with either Sporting CP or Manchester City awaiting them.

Newcastle United overcame Qarabag 3-2 in the return leg after a 6-1 first-leg win, setting up a last-16 tie against either Chelsea or Barcelona. Eddie Howe praised his players, calling the aggregate win "fantastic" despite a tight second leg.

Atletico Madrid followed a 3-3 draw in Belgium with a 4-1 home victory over Club Brugge, powered by a hat-trick from Alexander Sorloth. Diego Simeone's side now face Tottenham Hotspur or Liverpool in the next round.

Bayer Leverkusen, after a 2-0 away win in Greece, drew 0-0 at home and will meet either Arsenal or Bayern Munich in the last 16.

Bodo/Glimt's triumph marks a historic milestone and signals that even modest clubs can upset Europe's elite.



# Cheating Concerns Overblown, Says World Champion Gukesh

Gukesh rejects Kramnik's claims, stresses focus on fair, competitive play

**PRAGUE**

World Champion D. Gukesh has stated that the issue of cheating in chess is being exaggerated, dismissing claims by former world champion Vladimir Kramnik, who has controversially accused several players of unethical practices during online games.

Speaking at a press conference, Gukesh clarified his stance: "Obviously, I'm against any kind of unfair or unethical play. But it's a kind of problem that we have been seeing lately, and I feel it's being made bigger than it actually is." Gukesh's remarks align with those of other top players, including former World Number One Magnus Carlsen FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich, and Indian stars Arjun Erigaisi and Nihal Sarin, who have also criticized Kramnik's unsubstantiated allegations.

Turning to competition, Gukesh expressed excitement for the upcoming Candidates Tournament and insisted he does not believe in favourites. "I would love to face my citymate R. Praggnanandhaa," he said, emphasizing a preference for complex, fighting games that test strategic depth.

In the first round of the super tournament, Gukesh will play Hans Moke Niemann of the United States, a player renowned for his tactical prowess and resilience. Fellow Indian Aravindh Chithambaram will face Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattorov the recent Tata Steel Masters winner, promising a competitive start for India's top contenders.

Gukesh's comments reflect a broader sentiment in the chess community: while cheating is a concern, the focus should remain on preparation, skill, and competitive integrity rather than unverified accusations dominating headlines.

## Young Golfer Shubham Jaglan Eyes Strong Comeback on PGTI, Asian Tour

**NEW DELHI**

After a year competing in the third-tier PGA Americas, 20-year-old Shubham Jaglan returns to India aiming to make an impact on the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) and the Asian Tour. Since turning professional last July, Jaglan made the cut three times in nine PGA Americas outings, finishing tied third at the BioSteel Championship. The experience taught him how to manage consecutive tournaments, navigate tough courses, and compete at a high standard — lessons he hopes to bring home to India.

"I want to put my learnings from PGA Americas to use on the PGTI this season and also play on the Asian Tour. The level of the Asian Tour is definitely higher than what I'd get on PGA Americas, which is why I wanted to give it a go," Jaglan said. The Panipat-born golfer finished second in two PGTI events last year, including the season-ending Tata Open. He then secured his Asian Tour card by finishing 34th in the Q-School, joining fellow Indians Shaurya Bhattacharya, Rashid Khan, and Ajeetesh Sandhu. Last month, he claimed the DP World PGTI Qualifying School title by a five-shot margin, earning a full season card.

Jaglan is currently competing in 72 The League, PGTI's franchise-based tournament, held across Delhi-NCR with a six-team, match-play format. He was the second-highest buy at the auction, joining Hyderabad-based Charminar Champions for 19 lakh. "Big money does bring added responsibility.

# Medvedev urges ATP ranking overhaul to reduce players' workload

**LONDON**

World No. 11 Daniil Medvedev has called for a major rethink of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) calendar, suggesting that ranking points be awarded only at the Grand Slams and Masters 1000 events to ease the burden on players.

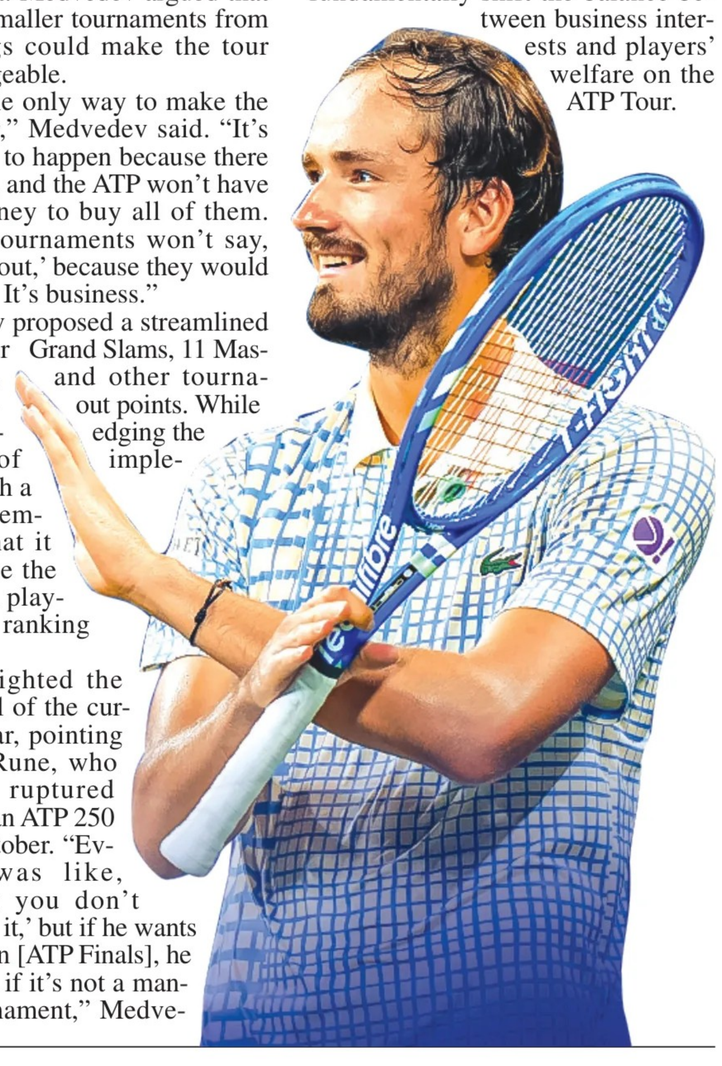
Currently, top players are required to compete in the four majors and eight Masters 1000 events, with the ATP reducing the ranking breakdown from 19 to 18 tournaments in 2026 after removing a mandatory ATP 500 commitment. Medvedev argued that excluding smaller tournaments from the rankings could make the tour more manageable.

"That's the only way to make the tour shorter," Medvedev said. "It's never going to happen because there are licenses, and the ATP won't have enough money to buy all of them. The other tournaments won't say, 'OK, we're out,' because they would lose money. It's business."

Medvedev proposed a streamlined system: four Grand Slams, 11 Masters events, and other tournaments without points. While acknowledging the difficulty of implementing such a change, he emphasized that it could reduce the pressure on players chasing ranking points.

He highlighted the physical toll of the current calendar, pointing to Holger Rune, who suffered a ruptured Achilles in an ATP 250 event in October. "Everybody was like, 'Yeah, but you don't have to play it,' but if he wants to be in Turin [ATP Finals], he has to, even if it's not a mandatory tournament," Medvedev said. "Last year I played seven tournaments in a row. Did I have to? No. I played bad at the beginning of the year, maybe I can get 100 points here, 200. If there would be no points, it's an easier decision." ATP chief Andrea Gaudenzi defended the current schedule in October, saying that the calendar remains largely the players' choice. Medvedev, however, believes a ranking system overhaul is essential to protect players' health and improve performance over a demanding 11-month season.

The proposal, if adopted, would fundamentally shift the balance between business interests and players' welfare on the ATP Tour.



## Tennis-USTA appoints Craig Tiley as new CEO to lead U.S. Open growth

**NEW YORK**

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) announced Craig Tiley, the longtime head of Tennis Australia, as its new CEO, tasked with overseeing the U.S. Open and driving growth of tennis across the country. Tiley, 64, will formally assume his duties in the coming months while coordinating with Tennis Australia to ensure a smooth leadership transition. He replaces Lew Sherr, who stepped down last year to join Major League Baseball's New York Mets as president of business operations. "I've long admired the organisation's leadership in growing the game across the United States and the extraordinary success of the U.S. Open," Tiley said. "I'm excited to return to American tennis and to work alongside our leadership locally and nationally to continue building the sport's reach, impact, and future."

During his 13-year tenure at Tennis Australia, Tiley helped tennis become the nation's second most participated sport behind soccer. He also served as Australian Open tournament director since 2006, driving record-breaking attendance and revenue while introducing innovative, player-first initiatives that set the event among the world's premier tennis tournaments. Tiley began his career in the United States as head coach of the University of Illinois men's tennis team from 1994 to 2005, leading the team to an undefeated 32–0 season and the NCAA Division I National Championship in 2003.

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